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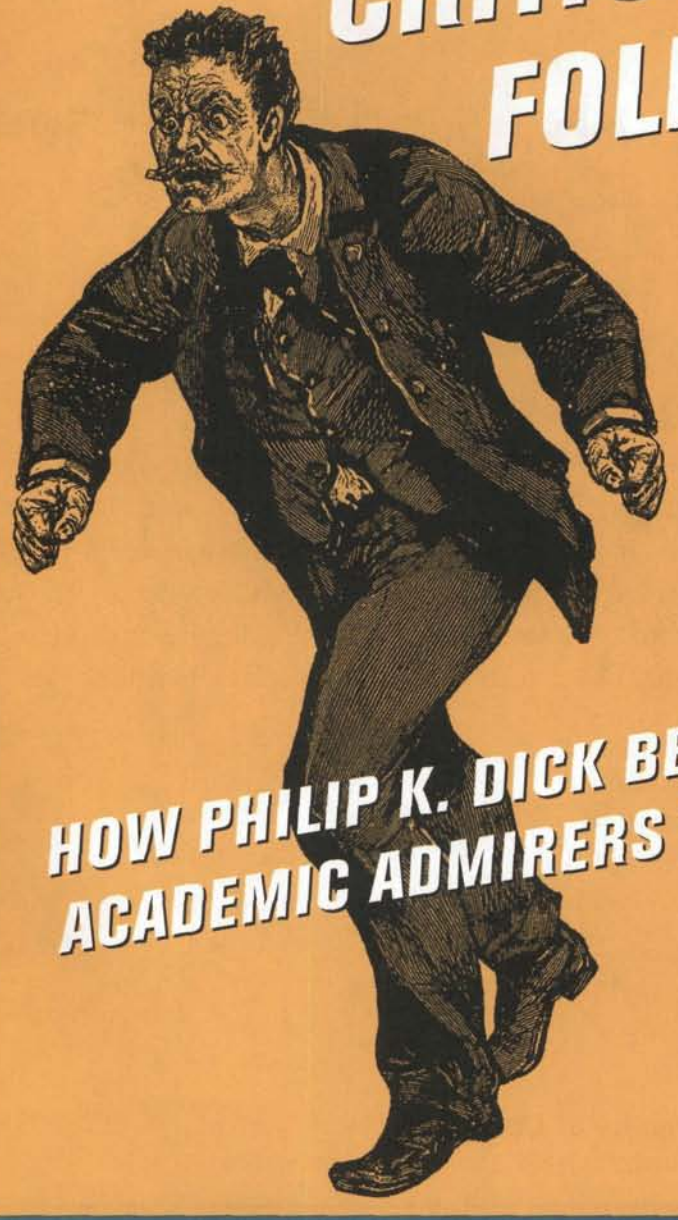

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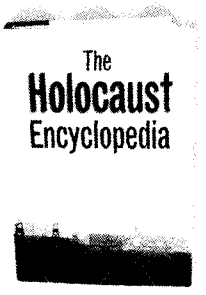

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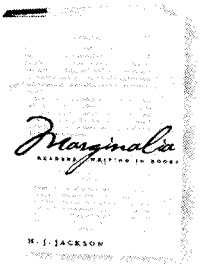

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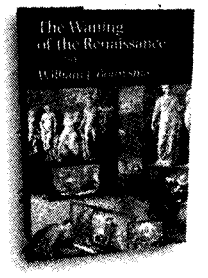

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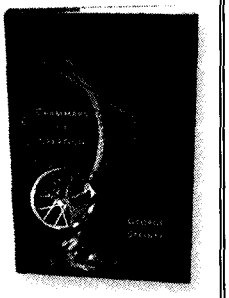

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Caroline Picart
Philosophy Department,
University of Wisconsin, Eau-Claire

For health-related reasons Giorgio Agamben will not participate in the program of the School of Criticism and Theory this summer. Instead Fredric Jameson will offer a seminar on problems of culture, politics, and history treating Benjamin, Gramsci, Flaubert and others. For further information contact the offices of the School of Criticism and Theory.

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Fig. *1819, "The Tragi-Comical History of the Lovers of Quimper-Corentin,"* Blackwood's Magazine:
"One day he overheard, in a coffee house, some Greeks and Jews conversing, in lingua Franca, on a terrible adventure that had just happened in the seraglio: a beautiful European slave, that had been lately brought thither, had made great resistance to the desires of the grand seignor."

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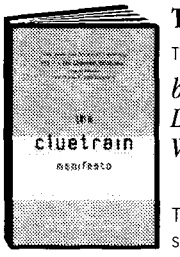

The Cluetrain Manifesto

The End of Business as Usual

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This nationally acclaimed best-seller is a spirited, unique, and wonderfully irreverent book that will challenge, provoke, and forever change your outlook on technology. A rich tapestry of anecdotes, object lessons, parodies, insights and predictions, *The Cluetrain Manifesto* depicts how the internet has radically reframed the seemingly immutable laws of business–and what businesses need to know in order to weather the seismic aftershocks.

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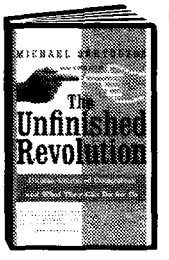

The Unfinished Revolution

Human-Centered Computers and What They Can Do for Us

by Michael Dertouzos

Dertouzos illustrates his vision of computing for the future, one that will change how businesses, organizations, and governments work with one another, along with how individuals interact. He promotes the concept of human-centered computing with five key technologies that will dramatically amplify our human capabilities. This intriguing manifesto describes the technological world as it should be and holds the keys to revolutionizing how we, as humans, relate to computers, as well as the world around us.

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by Tom DeMarco

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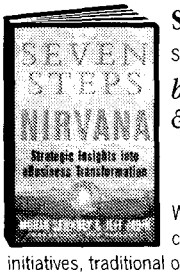

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by Mohan Sawhney, Ph.D. & Jeff Zabin

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SWEATING THE BIG STUFF

After reading the first paragraph of Liza Featherstone and Doug Henwood's article on sweatshops ["Clothes Encounters," March], I expected to be frustrated by another trite article describing antiglobalization activists as fashionable anarchist thugs. Instead, I appreciated the detailed discussion of the clash between economists over sweatshop issues and the value of jobs created by multinational corporations.

Unfortunately, the focus on rival economists and their battle over data creates a false impression: that activists need the help of experts to rebut economists such as Jagdish Bhagwati. In fact, many of the anti-sweatshop activists deeply understand the arguments and the stakes in the controversy surrounding sweatshops.

What is missing from Featherstone and Henwood's article is an understanding of the educational function of protest. New Social Movement scholars such as Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison argue that participation in a social movement can bring about a deep understanding of complicated issues. Some environmental justice activists have become experts on air-quality regulations, for example. It's shortsighted to think that anti-sweatshop activists need assistance to refute the arguments put forward by the Academic Consortium on International Trade and other pro-sweatshop economists.

MAXWELL SCHNURER
Professor of Communication
Marist College

Whatever Linda Lim is as an economist, she is being a lousy historian, and a cynic, when she accuses anti-sweatshop activists of engaging in "patronizing white-man's-burden stuff." She argues that the workers in such "shops" are doing just fine, thank you, and would like to enjoy their jobs undisturbed by misguided white guilt. Lim conveniently forgets that the term "white man's burden" was used by British imperialists to justify their colonial practices—the British "reluctantly" took on the burden of enlightening those poor savages by invading their countries and showing them the benefits of modernity. Lim, in waving her World Bank figures (always reliable sources of information) as an alibi for exploitation, is the one real reincarnation of the burdened white man: We don't want to be there, but they need us, damn it! Oh, and please cash this check.

DAVID PALUMBO-LIU
Associate Professor of
Comparative Literature
Stanford University

OBSTACLE COURSES

Good grief, a long piece on on-line teaching ["May the Course Be With You," March] and no mention of the completely stultifying nature of a course that is thirty or forty-five hours of a talking head. No real interaction, no challenging the teacher, no passion in the classroom, no challenging students' biases and misconceptions. Students in these programs will get their degrees and walk around thinking they're educated, when in reality they'll all have intellectual concussions.

STANISLAUS J. DUNDON
Professor of Philosophy
California State University
Sacramento

SWEARING IN

Apart from in Slovenia, which is more central European than Balkan—it has a law against roller-skating or bicycling faster than walking speed, for example—elaborate swearing is common throughout the former Yugoslavia ["@#$&%*#&$%!," Field Notes, March]. Unfortunately, from the same well of directness and emotional intensity sprang the violence and vindictiveness of the region's wars in the last decade, which have in turn increased people's reticence and distrust. One area that has avoided descent into all-out war is Macedonia, where a friend of mine likes to collect epithets at soccer matches. His two favorites represent Balkan rhetoric's poles of baroque opulence ("Referee, I will fuck your grandmother in the tit through a hole in her coffin") and classical restraint ("Referee, I will walk naked through your house").

JAMES PAPP
New York, NY

CORRECTIONS

In "A Blacker Shade of Yale" [March], Paul Gilroy's mother was misidentified as Guinean; in fact, she is from Guyana, not Guinea. Due to an editing error, the poet James McAuley's name was misspelled in "The Phantom Fisherman" [Field Notes, March].

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CLAIM AGAINST H. G. WELLS

FLORENCE DEEKS (LEFT) WITH HER SISTER MABEL IN 1932

THE INVISIBLE WOMAN

IN 1925, AN UNKNOWN CANADIAN writer named Florence Amelia Deeks sued the then-world-famous British writer H.G. Wells for "literary piracy." Seeking $500,000 in damages, she accused Wells of pilfering from her unpublished manuscript "The Web of the World's Romance" when he wrote his enormously successful 1920 book, *The Outline of History.* Five years later, the case went to trial in Toronto, and despite three expert witnesses who supported Deeks's suit, it was dismissed. Her subsequent and costly appeals to the Ontario Supreme Court and the Privy Council in Whitehall, London, proved fruitless—as did the letter she wrote to King George V.

The incident earns a few dismissive pages, at most, in biographies of Wells. "She is just a misfortune that has come upon me," Wells remarked in 1933, "a sort of Act of God without the slightest negligence or fault of any kind on my part." But perhaps Wells protested too much? According to the Carleton University historian A.B. McKillop—whose book on the controversy, *The Spinster and the Prophet,* was published in Canada last fall by Macfarlane Walter & Ross and has recently appeared in the United Kingdom—Deeks had a stronger case than the official record suggests.

"The Web of the World's Romance" was Deeks's history of the world from the creation of the earth until World War I. It was also a feminist work. ("Woman was 'architect and builder' of the first home," she contended. "Woman, not man, was the progenitor of communal life.") As McKillop explains, Deeks trawled through "scholarly and general works of history, daring them to mention women and teasing [out]...anything at all that spoke to woman's place in history." In July 1918, she submitted "The Web of the World's Romance" for publication to Macmillan Canada. After eight months, the book was rejected. When Macmillan returned the manuscript, Deeks was puzzled to find that it had been, as she wrote later, "soiled, thumbed, worn and torn, with over a dozen pages turned down at the corners." But she didn't think much of it until she read a review of *The Outline of History.*

Wells had started writing *The Outline of History,* which also told the story of the earth from its creation onward, about four months after Deeks had sent her manuscript to Macmillan Canada. He finished the first edition about a year later, in December 1919. "It was the first time that a history of the world had been written from a full-scale internationalist point of view," explains Wells biographer and former British Labour Party leader Michael Foot. "He was arguing that racism and nationalism had led to the First World War and must be stopped." The project was a characteristically Wellsian idea and a natural extension of his

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advocacy throughout World War I for a League of Nations. *The Outline of History*—little read today—quickly sold two million copies in English, joining Shakespeare and the Bible on middle-class bookshelves.

In *The Spinster and the Prophet*, McKillop makes the circumstantial case against Wells persuasively. Having weighed the historical and textual evidence, he concedes that Wells never copied outright—*The Outline of History* is true to Wells's distinctive voice throughout. But McKillop does find whole paragraphs in which Wells and Deeks list events in the same order. Furthermore, Wells makes factual errors that are consistent with those made by Deeks. Wells and Deeks also make parallel omissions: Adam Smith, for example, appears in neither text. In one particularly striking case, Wells seems to use an unattributed quotation from a work also quoted without attribution by Deeks. (Confronted on this point, Wells admitted he had not made use of the book in which the words originally appeared.)

Addressing a key piece of the puzzle, McKillop offers a speculative account of how Deeks's manuscript might have found its way into Wells's hands. At the time of the controversy, Deeks charged that Wells had received her manuscript from Macmillan, Wells's regular London publisher. McKillop has found documents—not entered as evidence at the trial—suggesting that Macmillan Canada's management was not entirely trustworthy: The company's director was running lucrative scams out of the Macmillan offices, and a plagiarism suit involving Deeks's editor had recently been settled out of court. McKillop notes that Wells's lifelong friend Richard Gregory served as an education adviser to Macmillan U.K. and thus could have had access to Deeks's manuscript.

McKillop also finds *The Outline of History* to be suspiciously vehement in its dismissal of women's contribution to history. "In the few instances where he talks about woman's status, place, or physical makeup," McKillop says, "he seems to be making a commentary on what Deeks has said and rebutting it. These instances have no bearing on the rest of his argument."

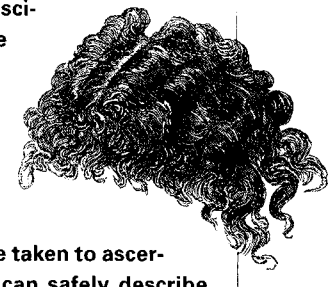
Finally, there is a simple logistical argument: McKillop finds it hard to believe that a nonhistorian—even a prolific and famously well-read one like Wells—could have written a 1,324-page history text in just over a year, while simultaneously seeing his novel *Joan and Peter* through to publication, writing thirty thousand words of *The Undying Fire*, and producing various political pamphlets.

McKillop is not the first scholar to level piracy charges against Wells. (He notes that Ingvald Raknem, in *H.G. Wells and His Critics*, claims that Wells took "words, phrases, and general outlines...[from] writers as diverse as Kipling, Sterne, Swift, de Maupassant, Poe, Flammarion and Gourmont.") But to some, the suggestion that Wells owed any of *The Outline of History* to Deeks is nonsense. After all, the book is a work of history, events occur in a preestablished order, and Wells had been discussing *The Outline of History*'s basic argument for years. "I think it's all rubbish. Absolute rubbish," says Michael Foot. He has an ally in David C. Smith, author and editor of numerous books on Wells, including the exhaustive *H.G. Wells: Desperately Mortal*. Smith believes McKillop has uncovered some interesting new evidence, "but if Wells did plagiarize—and I

In 1925, Florence Deeks [illegible] sued H.G. Wells for [illegible] today, a historian [illegible]

FLOWS THE DON

HE'S A RESPECTED PROFESSOR OF COGNITIVE SCIENCE and the author of *The Language Instinct* and other acclaimed books. But MIT's Steven Pinker has found that some of his colleagues are as impressed by what's next to his brain as they are by his brain itself. Inspired by Pinker's unruly mane of curly hair, the Cambridge-based *Annals of Improbable Research* recently announced the formation of the Luxuriant Flowing Hair Club for Scientists (LFHCfS), "a club for scientists who have, or believe they have, luxuriant flowing hair."



Since the club's founding, dozens of scientists around the world have become members, some through self-nomination and some, like Pinker, through nominations from admirers. Some nominations have proved controversial—even patron saint Pinker's: "Given the curl factor," wrote one skeptical investigator, "I believe measurements must be taken to ascertain the level of turbulence before we can safely describe [Pinker's] hair as 'flowing.' This is a very similar problem to the design of carpool lanes on freeways."

Whether his hair is turbulent or not, Pinker is proud of his tousled mop; one sleuth discovered these sentences in his book *How the Mind Works,* in a passage purportedly about natural selection: "Luxuriant hair is always pleasing, possibly because it shows not only current health but a record of health in the years before. Malnutrition and disease weaken the hair as it grows from the scalp, leaving a fragile spot in the shaft. Long hair implies a long history of good health."

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don't think he did—how did that material get from Toronto to London?"

Others find McKillop's discoveries perfectly plausible. "There's no doubt about Wells's genius," says Michael Coren, author of *The Invisible Man: The Life and Liberties of H.G. Wells* (1993), which addresses Wells's misogyny and anti-Semitism. "But in terms of Wells's character, it's abundantly possible. Wells was an appalling man. He was a spoiled brat. He lacked grace. And he was certainly not honorable."

Had Deeks prevailed in 1930, McKillop believes, the case would have been one of the most notorious literary scandals of the twentieth century. Might Deeks have done better in today's more litigious and less antifeminist climate? In 1928, after all, the Supreme Court of Canada unanimously ruled that women did not legally exist as "persons," and Wells's lawyers effectively discredited Deeks as a spinster with too much time on her hands. But the British attorney Anthony Julius, an authority on matters of literary copyright, thinks Deeks would face an uphill battle even today. "The law hasn't significantly changed in terms of copyright infringement," he says. "So, I don't suppose that the issues to be decided would be any different now than they were in 1928 or 1930."

Sadly, McKillop's book may be the closest Deeks herself will ever get to print. She watched powerlessly as the perfect moment for "The Web of the World's Romance" slipped away. "It's pure speculation," says McKillop, "but it's possible her book, with a good editor, might have been published, and we might not have the kind of recession of feminism, or at least consciousness of feminism, that seems to have taken place in the 1920s and 1930s. What if, in 1922, her book had been published? Who knows what effect it could have had on the writing of women's history or on feminism itself? It can only have done that cause good and not harm."

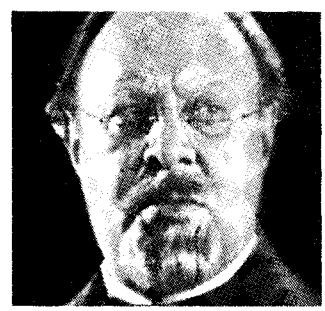
AIDA EDEMARIAM

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF HERR DOKTOR

IN 1925, WHEN HE WAS THIRTY-three, Walter Benjamin submitted his *Habilitation*—the required second dissertation, or postdoctoral thesis—to the University of Frankfurt. But Benjamin, who earlier had been an activist for educational reform, found his ambitions thwarted. Because his *Habilitation* topic—German drama in the Baroque period—fell between two disciplines, literature and philosophy, no professor would sponsor him. He spent the rest of his life in relative obscurity as an independent writer and critic, making a name for himself in the academy only after his death.

Three-quarters of a century later, Germany's notoriously old-fashioned universities are still frustrating the country's would-be academics, many of whom avoid the system's indignities by leaving the country to complete their studies. Once considered among the world's best, the German system is slowly collapsing under its own weight. Obtaining a professorship involves the time-consuming *Habilitation* process, which requires young academics to spend years in indentured servitude to apathetic professors and rarely allows them to perform independent research. Most students are approaching middle age when they finally become professors. And once there, they have little incentive to perform: As civil servants, their salaries are determined by a federal pay scale, and raises are given automatically every two years.

With many of the country's budding stars heading to Berkeley and MIT instead of Heidelberg and Humboldt, and with more than half of all German academics scheduled to retire in the next few years, things are looking increasingly bleak for German higher education. But the country's minister of education and science, Edelgard Bulmahn, has started an all-out campaign to turn things around. Bulmahn has drawn up a new federal law that, if implemented, would



PROFESSOR IMMANUEL RATH IN 'THE BLUE ANGEL' (1930)

eventually supplant the *Habilitation* process. The law would institute a junior position—akin to an American-style assistant professorship—that would involve teaching, research, and raising funds to support that research.

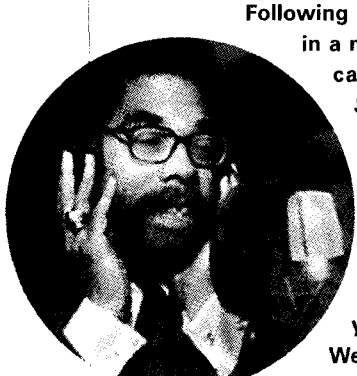
In another controversial move, Bulmahn's law would introduce merit-based pay for all faculty. For Germany's senior professors—who are accustomed to relaxing while teams of *Habilitation* candidates handle their workloads and whose taste for three-day weeks has earned them the nickname *Dienstagmittwochdonnerstag* professors (Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday professors)—Bulmahn's proposal sounds like the end of the world.

Under Bulmahn's plan, the junior-professor jobs would be limited to three years, with the

THE NEAL PETERS COLLECTION (TOP); LARRY DALTON (BOTTOM)

THE NOTORIOUS W.E.S.T.

HARVARD PROFESSOR CORNEL WEST MAY HAVE MADE A NAME for himself in academia, but his latest endeavor brings to mind some not-so-academic names: Bruce Willis, Shaquille O'Neal, William Shatner, Orrin Hatch, Leonard Nimoy, John Ashcroft. Following in their footsteps, West is a celebrity in a nonmusical field who now has a side career as a recording artist. As the *Sacramento News & Review* reported in February, West recently returned to his native Sacramento to cut an album of "spoken word poetry and sociopolitical commentary, recorded over R&B, funk, and hip-hop music." Scheduled to be released later this year, *Sketches of My Culture* features West's meditations on African-American history. "In the music itself," West told the *News & Review*, "we're talking about the agony, anguish and the sorrow being wrestled with and transfigured from a people who went from slave ships to 'hoods."



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possibility of an extension for up to three more. After that, a candidate could apply for a full professorship at the same, or any other, university. Meanwhile, scholars who have excelled in academia internationally, or who have been successful in industry or other nonacademic fields, would occasionally be allowed to bypass the junior professorship entirely. In any case, academics would be required to change universities at least once during their careers.

Another of Bulmahn's proposed reforms, the institution of merit-based pay, calls for salaries and raises to be negotiated on a case-by-case basis, with oversight by outside panels. Under the existing rules, the only way for a professor to get a raise higher than the one mandated by the state is to apply regularly for open positions at other universities. Professors can then use better salary offers from other schools to bargain for bigger raises at their current jobs. These sorts of disingenuous negotiations are disruptive and costly, Bulmahn says, and often lead to positions remaining open for several years.

> With half of all German academics scheduled to retire in a few years, German higher education is looking bleak.

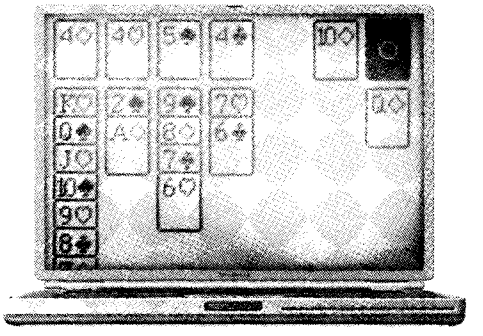
Bulmahn's reforms will be considered by Parliament later this spring. The law is expected to pass, and could be in effect as early as next year. But the changes face stiff opposition from both the Old Guard, who could lose their cushy lifestyle, and from rival reformers.

The Association of German University Professors, which represents about 60 percent of the full professors at Germany's eighty universities, has denounced Bulmahn's proposal, calling it a threat to the standards on which German academe is based. "The *Habilitation* is a test of quality," insists Hartmut Schiedermair, president of the association and a law professor at the University of Cologne. But Eicke Weber, a German-born and -educated professor of material science who has been at the University of California at Berkeley since 1983, argues that some of the country's aging professors are just trying to protect themselves. "Professors after fifty, fifty-five, sixty are not very innovative," Weber says. "They can provide a nice output because of the [assistance of] young professors." Older professors, he says, are simply afraid that "they will be cut off from the flow of new ideas."

But even some of Bulmahn's supporters express concerns about the proposed junior professorship, calling it essentially an adjunct position. After working as a junior professor for three to six years, these critics point out, a candidate would still have to apply for a full professorship. Unlike most American assistant professorships, these junior positions would not be tenure-track, though the more impressive junior professors would presumably be strong candidates for other jobs. (For her part, Bulmahn has promised that junior professors who do quality work will have "a very good opportunity to get a professorship.") Another group, led by Teresa Kulawik, a lecturer at Berlin's Free University who is currently on leave at the University College of South Stockholm, has charged that Bulmahn's plan is unfair to women. The junior-professor position, Kulawik and her allies insist, would involve too heavy a workload and would make things difficult for women who would like to have children. "Junior professors are a cheap solution," Kulawik says. "They are cheaper [than full professors] but with the same teaching load."

Despite all the criticism, Bulmahn is forging ahead. "It is absolutely necessary to change," she says. "We have to break up this rigid hierarchy."

ALISA ROTH



POWERBOOK TO THE PEOPLE

THREE YEARS AGO, WHEN THE Yale Law School underwent a $100 million renovation, school officials declared it a great leap forward. But not everyone was so optimistic. Even before the renovations began, Yale law professor Ian Ayres complained to Yale's building committee that wiring all classrooms for the Internet, as the renovation plan dictated, posed a serious threat to the educational environment. Laptop computers already offered too many distractions in the classroom, he felt, and easy Internet access would only make things worse. Ayres, a self-professed Web addict who uses "cyber-sitter" filtering software to keep himself from surfing at work, understood that Minesweeper, E*Trade, and Google are the Devil's playthings.

Ayres has now achieved some measure of vindication. Last November, he sent a memo to the Yale law faculty, citing the "rampant and growing abuse of the Internet during class" and urging his fellow professors to adopt a rule limiting laptop use in their classes to note taking only. The initial response from professors was tepid. But in late March, when Ayres published a version of his memo on the *New York Times* Op-Ed page, colleagues at Yale and elsewhere began to voice their support, and many have now raised the issue in their own classrooms.

Web-loyal students, meanwhile, have manned the cyber-barricades. In a heated on-line discussion after the November memo, some Yale students complained that Ayres's injunction smacked of paternalism. "It reminds me of grade school teachers complaining about kids chewing gum," fumed one student. "I am 28 years old. I

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Yale students agreed to stop surfing the Web in class if professors would return exams promptly.

am capable of making my own decisions." Others claimed that the Web allows them to multitask, freeing up time to study later on; still others argued that the Web keeps them awake and thus encourages attendance. The most aggressive students practiced a form of extortion: They agreed to stop surfing the Web if teachers would return exams promptly.

In the face of such vehement opposition, Ayres is considering several remedies. He says he might simply begin each term by announcing that he considers it rude to surf the Web during class, thereby relying on what analysts of law and economics might call the "image cost of noncompliance" to deter students. He's also considering instituting a "smoking section" in the back of the classroom for students who insist on surfing, so as to minimize the distraction to himself and others.

For the time being, though, Ayres seems happy just to discuss the issue with his students. In fact, one gets the sneaking suspicion that this whole controversy is a ploy by Ayres—who calls himself "a gear-head law-and-economics guy"—to teach his students to think about laws, rules, and regulations with an eye on free-market principles. In class and during office hours, Ayres's students have contested his proposal by arguing that a professor has an implicit contractual arrangement with his students to be engaging; when he is not, they have a right to tune out. Ayres counters that the implicit contract is one requiring students not to play computer games or surf the Web during class.

Ayres has also raised the issue of whether classroom Internet use has unintended and harmful third-party consequences, or "negative externalities": Wouldn't classroom dynamics suffer if weaker students, struggling to follow a professor's lecture, observe their more able peers casually tooling around on eBay? To this charge, students have responded that there is a *positive* externality involved, because the potential for student distraction requires the professor to improve his or her presentation.

Though he doesn't completely buy that argument, Ayres does seem tickled by its free-market verve. "That's really using the master's tool against him," he says proudly. Maybe his students were paying attention after all.

BENJAMIN SOSKIS

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TRAVELING THEORY

ON MARCH 31, THE CALIFORnia-based Institute for Historical Review planned to convene a conference in Lebanon promoting its agenda of Holocaust revisionism. But the event was not to be. A group of fourteen Arab intellectuals, including the literary critic Edward Said and the poets Adonis and Mahmoud Darwish, issued a letter asserting that they were "outraged by this anti-Semitic undertaking." The Lebanese government promptly banned the meeting. In an editorial, the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* praised Said and his fellow signers for "taking a stand which bolsters intellectual integrity and political sense in the Middle East, during a period of crisis and distress."

It's not every day that Edward Said receives such high praise in Israel. Recently, the eminent scholar and longtime critic of Zionism has been reproached for his opposition to the Oslo accords and for throwing a rock near the Israel-Lebanon border. And yet the *Ha'aretz* editorial followed another Said-Israel rapprochement of sorts. This February, Beit Hasofer, a Jerusalem literary society, held a public forum to commemorate the first Hebrew edition of Said's postcolonial classic, *Orientalism*. Though the book has been available in Israel in an English edition for years—and has been translated into more than twenty-five languages—the event drew a bustling crowd.

Why all the fuss over a twenty-three-year-old book? The release of *Orientalism* by the distinguished Israeli publishing house Am Oved is rich in symbolic significance. Like his political writings, Said's literary scholarship has frequently been attacked on political grounds. "*Orientalism* was

perceived as being very anti-Zionist" when it first appeared, recalls the Ben-Gurion University historian Dror Ze'evi, "and people in Israeli universities didn't think it was a good book."

Hoping to promote Said's work in Israel, the UCLA historian Gabriel Piterberg teamed up with Ze'evi (a former colleague) and initiated the Hebrew-translation project. They pitched the idea to Said and to Am Oved's nonfiction editor, Eli Shaltiel. Though Said was enthusiastic, Shaltiel was more tentative: He agreed to go ahead with the Hebrew translation only if Ze'evi and Piterberg would help bear the considerable costs. Ultimately, Am Oved did receive additional funding from Ben-Gurion University's Chaim Herzog Center for Middle East Studies and Diplomacy, which Ze'evi chairs.

The project immediately drew criticism. "Opponents of the translation initially said it was an old book, that there's no point," Piterberg recalls. And why, some argued, should a university named after David Ben-Gurion—the late Israeli prime minister and Zionist pioneer—be supporting the work of an anti-Zionist? Shmuel Ahituv, the former director of Ben-Gurion University Press and a professor of Bible and ancient Near East studies, supported an alternative proposal for a critical edition of *Orientalism*. "I'm not a fan of Said, but I was not opposing [Piterberg and Ze'evi's proposal] for political reasons," he says. Nor, he says, did he oppose the source of the funding. Along with other scholars, Ahituv "wanted to publish the book with other articles accompanying it." Piterberg assumed that these articles would be largely dismissive, and he rejected the proposal, calling it "beyond audacious."

> The distinguished Israeli publishing house Am Oved has released the first Hebrew edition of Edward Said's classic postcolonial work, *Orientalism*.

Sitting in his corner office at Columbia University, Said seems underwhelmed by the controversy. "That's been my history," he says. "I'm sure my American and European publishers are not in entire agreement with my points of view either." Said is pleased by the appearance of the Hebrew edition; in recent years, he has sought to engage with Israeli intellectuals and reproached his Arab colleagues for not doing the same. "I think it's important for Palestinians to be involved in Israeli debate.... Not only Palestinians but other Arabs who won't engage Israel." He had originally planned to lecture at Ben-Gurion University in honor of the Hebrew edition, but his plans were frustrated by a bout of illness and by recent developments in the Middle East.

Can Said convince Israeli readers that his book is worth their while? In a special preface to the Hebrew edition, he stresses that *Orientalism*, far from being an anti-Zionist polemic, demonstrates that a "common history" connects Arabs and Jews. Indeed, though Said reminds his readers that *Orientalism* "in part stems from my experiences as an Arab under British colonialism," he is frustrated that critics have viewed the book primarily through the lens of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. After all, the book argues that all Semites, Arab and Jew alike, were dehumanized by the scholarly discourse of British, French, and American philologists and linguists. Both Arabs and Jews, Said argues, were subjected to a pernicious Western myth of their "arrested development."

Despite Said's allusion to a "common history," many of *Orientalism*'s critics question his linkage of Western colonialism with Zionism. In *Orientalism*—and even more so in his later political work *The Question of Palestine*—Said argues that Zionism fashioned its own dehumanizing myth: "What we have now is a Jewish hero,

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Said is frustrated that critics have viewed *Orientalism* through the lens of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

constructed out of a reconstructed cult of the adventurer-pioneer-Orientalist...and his creeping, mysteriously fearsome shadow, the Arab Oriental." Unfortunately for Said, the cover art for the Hebrew edition of *Orientalism*—Horace Vernet's 1840 painting *Judah and Tamar*—reinforces the idea that the book concerns the Palestinian question: In Vernet's painting, a dark-skinned Judah wears traditional Arab garb and beseeches a wary, European-looking Tamar.

Said's aspirations for his Hebrew edition may have been damaged by last year's rock-throwing incident. But his attack on the Lebanese Holocaust deniers' conference could win him some new supporters. Amatzia Baram, an Israeli historian and frequent critic of Said, says he was "impressed and very happy" with the protest and that he would even consider inviting Said to conferences that he organizes between Arabs and Jewish Israelis.

Still, Piterberg doubts that Said will ever gain widespread acceptance in Israel. "His views are fundamentally unacceptable in Israel," he says. "They are accepted by about fifty people. And I know all of them."

JOHN KEARNEY

THE JOY OF, UH, HIGHER EDUCATION

WORRIED ABOUT YOUR CHILDREN DISCOVERING PRURIENT reading material on your nightstand? Hearst Books may have come up with the perfect solution to this age-old parental worry. According to the book-industry e-mail newsletter "Publisher's Lunch," Hearst will publish in May a book called *Married Lust,* "an explicit guide to keeping passion alive after tying the knot." To discourage kids from reading it, the book will be published with a reversible jacket: One side will feature the book's actual title, and the other will bear a phony title of such spectacular dullness that it is sure to ward off curious adolescents. The title Hearst chose: *Modern Tactics in Higher Education.*

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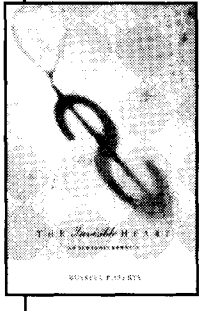

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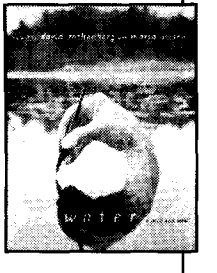

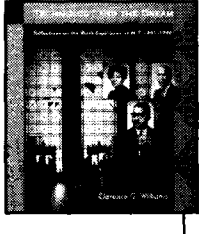

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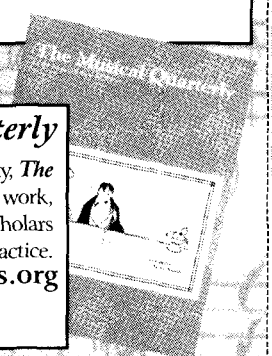

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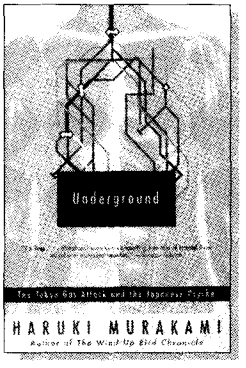

Underground

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In March 1995, agents of a Japanese religious cult attacked the Tokyo subway with the deadly nerve gas, sarin. Based on hundreds of interviews with the people involved—from the survivors to the perpetrators to the relatives of those who died—Murakami's account is concerned with the fundamental issues that led to the attack. This enthralling and unique work of nonfiction is as wonderfully executed as Murakami's brilliant novels.

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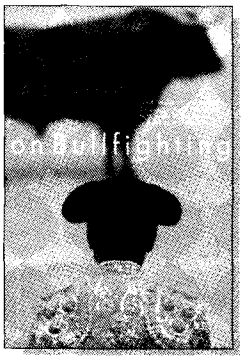

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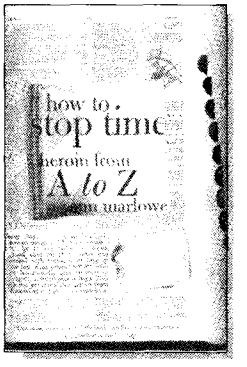

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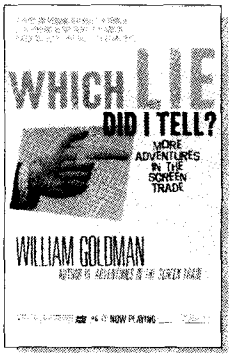

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Breakthrough Books

THE WORKPLACE

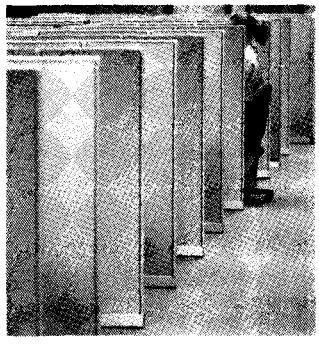
WE ASKED FIVE SCHOLARS TO RECOMMEND THE BEST RECENT BOOKS ON THE WORLD OF WORK.

Dalton Conley, associate professor of sociology at New York University and author of *Honky* (California, 2000).

"Recent upheavals in the world of work are not limited to dot-coms; these changes have extended all the way to the other end of the economic spectrum. In ***Sidewalk*** (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1999), the result of five years of fieldwork, **Mitchell Duneier** chronicles the difficult financial realities faced by New York City street vendors who hawk used books and old magazines. These vendors, many of whom are former convicts, are unacknowledged victims of the new economy, Duneier shows. The massive expansion of the prison system over the past twenty years has landed more and more poor people in jail; once released, these people often discover that their criminal records frustrate their efforts to get jobs in traditional workplaces. The informal street-vendor economy thus offers a few of them a way to put their lives back together. Recently, though, the city government has made their lives harder, not easier, as Duneier demonstrates: A few years ago, as part of its focus on 'quality of life' issues, the Giuliani administration amended the regulations governing the vending of printed matter; the regulations now require vendors to ply their trade at least twenty feet from the entrance to 'traditional' retail establishments. These new rules have forced most vendors out of prime selling spots, making it very difficult for them to sell enough merchandise to make a living. The political economy of the street is changing right beneath our noses. Duneier makes us take notice."

Jefferson Cowie, assistant professor of history at the School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University and author of *Capital Moves: RCA's Seventy-Year Quest for Cheap Labor* (New Press, 2001).

"**Richard Sennett's *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work***



in the New Capitalism (Norton, 1998) is a thoughtful meditation on the dark side of today's economy, where workers feel increasingly disposable and are rarely allowed to develop meaningful relationships with their employers. In one telling example, Sennett returns to a bakery he wrote about in *The Hidden Injuries of Class* (Knopf), his 1972 collaboration with Jonathan Cobb. Where twenty-five years earlier he had found proud, hardworking Greek bakers, Sennett now finds a tangled web of part-time, nonunionized workers of various backgrounds who have little interaction with each other and even less contact with the bread they produce: Many employees work with computer images of bread, not the bread itself. Moving beyond classic Marxian notions of alienation, Sennett explores how the influence of new technologies and flexible production strategies has compromised workers' sense of self and integrity—in both the white-collar and blue-collar worlds."

Kathryn M. Dudley, associate professor of American studies and anthropology at Yale University and author of *The End of the Line: Lost Jobs, New Lives in Postindustrial America* (Chicago, 1994).

"Coverage of dot-coms dominates the business media, reinforcing the common belief that low-skill 'McJobs' play a marginal role in today's economy. Yet as the anthropologist **Katherine S. Newman** shows in ***No Shame in My Game: The Working Poor in the Inner City*** (Knopf and Russell Sage, 1999), the work lives of hamburger flippers are not fundamentally different from the work lives of those in many 'mainstream' fields. Newman takes us behind the counters of a fast-food restaurant chain in Harlem, illuminating the predicament of countless men and women who struggle to support families on jobs that do not pay a living wage. The fast-food workplace, she persuasively shows, can be an oasis of stability in a poverty-stricken ghetto. Like workers in every walk of life, Harlem's working poor participate in the construction of a 'workplace' that puts work at the center of their identity; they are ever conscious of—and complicit in—

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the morally charged distinction between the employed and the unemployed."

Susan Porter Benson, associate professor of history at the University of Connecticut and author of *Household Accounts: Working-Class Family Economies in the Inter-War United States* (Cornell, forthcoming).

"**Julie Willett's** ***Permanent Waves: The Making of the American Beauty Shop*** (NYU, 2000) is a cut above most workplace histories. Looking at the separate but sometimes overlapping development of Euro-American and African-American hairdressing from the early twentieth century to the present, Willett shows how race shaped different trajectories for black and white salons. Though both black and white hairdressers were usually in lower income brackets, she writes, African-American salons occupied respected places in their communities, often serving as gathering places for activists involved in struggles against racism and other societal problems. But Euro-American salons rarely achieved such legitimacy within their own communities. Often using the words of the hairdressers she studied, Willett braids together central themes of twentieth-century U.S. labor history: She shows how scientific management practices undermined work culture and how increasing professionalization within the industry worked against women's interests and gave disproportionate power to white men, who operated the largest and most lucrative salons. Willett's book will make readers look at salons, and other workplaces, in a new light."

David Bills, associate professor of sociology of education at the University of Iowa and author of *The New Modern Times: Factors Reshaping the World of Work* (SUNY, 1995).

"Is the customer always right? Maybe not, but today increasing numbers of people around the world make their living as customer-service representatives, working to calm angry customers and solve the problems of confused ones. To write ***On the Front Line: Organization of Work in the Information Economy*** (Cornell, 1999), **Stephen Frenkel, Marek Korczynski, Karen Shire,** and **May Tam** spent four years studying more than a thousand so-called frontline workers employed by eight large corporations in the United States, Australia, and Japan. As the authors show, customer-service representatives must walk the delicate line between sincerity and disingenuousness: They must be friendly and helpful to demanding customers while watching out for their employers' interests. The authors contrast two possible futures for customer-service employees: an empowered one of rewarding and autonomous work and a regimented one of intensified work performed under increased surveillance. A strong customer-service organization often makes the difference between a successful company and an unsuccessful one. *On the Front Line* shows us why."

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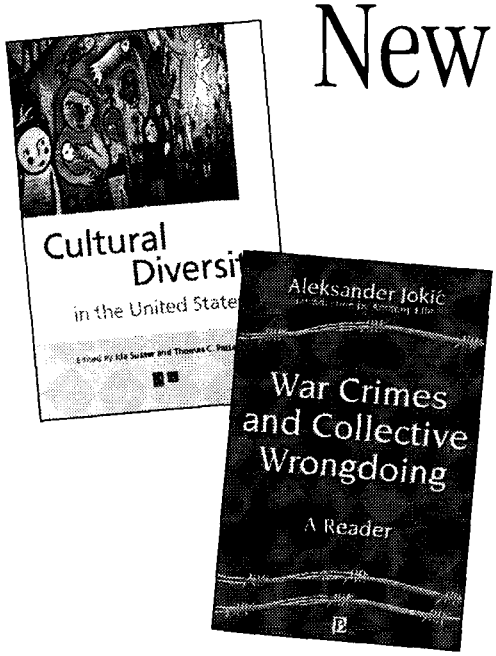

New Books, New Perspectives

Cultural Diversity in the United States

A Critical Reader

Edited by **Ida Susser** *and* **Thomas C. Patterson,** *Hunter College (CUNY); University of California, Riverside*

Comprised of over 20 newly commissioned chapters and other pieces, and sponsored by the American Anthropological Association, ***Cultural Diversity in the United States: A Critical Reader*** offers a wide range of perspectives on the central issues of cultural diversity in the United States by some of anthropology's most notable scholars. The contributors to this landmark reader rethink diversity, identity politics, and multiculturalism, and provide tools for the analysis of critical political issues in the United States today. Important areas of discussion include: re-examining U.S. social and political history; establishing a framework for the understanding of inequality; and confronting simplistic images of diversity in an effort to enrich and deepen understanding of difference.

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A Reader

Edited by **Aleksandar Jokic,** *Portland State University*

The subject of war crimes and collective wrongdoing - whether in the name of ethnic cleansing or a more veiled form of nationalism – is in the forefront of contemporary discourse in politics, international affairs, and political philosophy. This volume addresses urgent questions about the nature of war crimes, nationalism, ethnic cleansing, and collective responsibility.

In fourteen newly written essays, a distinguished team of international scholars considers war crimes and collective wrongdoing from a variety of moral, political, and legal perspectives. There is a substantial introduction from Anthony Ellis and each group of essays is followed by an afterword from the editor and suggestions for further reading.

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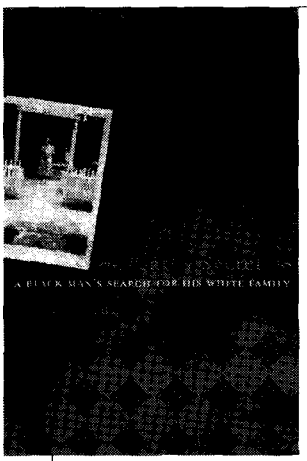

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by Neil Henry

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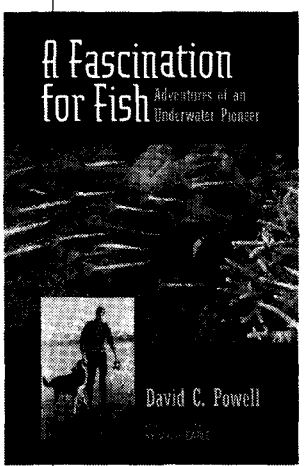

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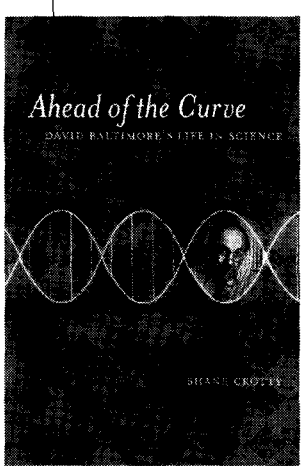

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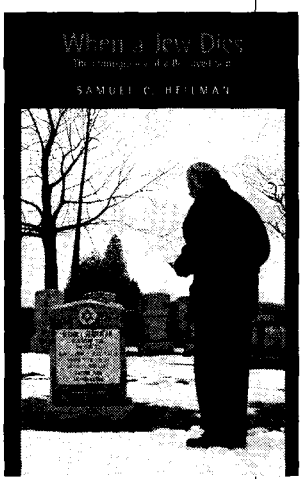

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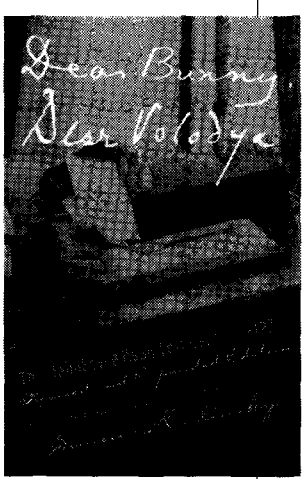

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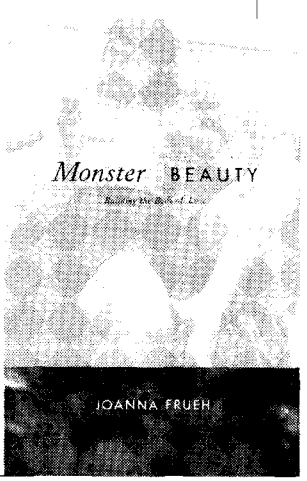

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Asian American Dreams

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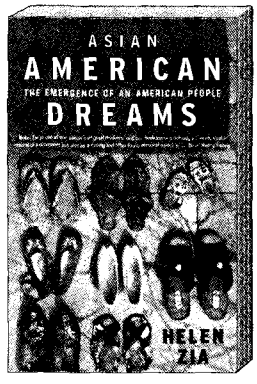
Helen Zia



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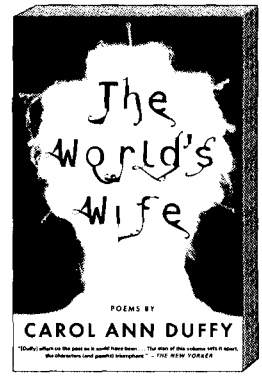
Carol Ann Duffy



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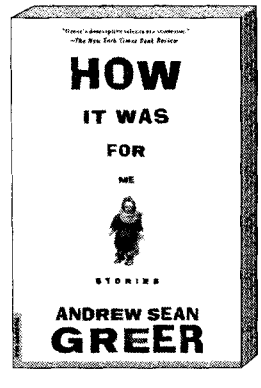
Andrew Sean Greer



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GO NORTH, YOUNG MAN

THE FIRST GEORGE BUSH COMPARED THEM to flag burners. The political activist Todd Gitlin accused them of narcissism. Disgruntled Canadians called them job stealers, layabouts, leftist revolutionaries, and American imperialists—until Canadian prime minister Pierre Trudeau extolled them as moral exemplars. They were the fifty thousand young Americans who fled to Canada to avoid fighting in the Vietnam War. Their little-known story, as told in John Hagan's *Northern Passage: American Vietnam War Resisters in Canada* (Harvard), deserves more than a footnote in the history of the antiwar movement. Indeed, according to Hagan, an American-born sociologist at the University of Toronto (who himself opted for graduate school in Alberta once student draft deferments were no longer forthcoming), the exiles of Toronto's "American Ghetto" changed Canada for the better. Not only did they become a distinct force in Canadian social and political life, but their plight spurred Canada to reassert its national sovereignty and resuscitate its national pride.

American war resisters began crossing the world's longest undefended border as early as 1964, presenting Canadian immigration authorities with a dilemma. On the one hand, the authorities wanted to appease the United States. (Being Canadian, as Trudeau liked to point out, is like sleeping with an elephant: "No matter how friendly and even-tempered the beast...one is affected by every twitch and grunt.") But turning away war resisters violated Canadian immigration law, which does not authorize deportations based solely on one's military status in a foreign country. So immigration officials enacted a covert policy, according to which draft dodgers were allowed to enter the country on the same terms as any other American but military deserters were discreetly turned away.

This end run around Canada's immigration laws was soon discovered, and the defenders of Canada's national integrity were outraged. Institutions like the United Church, the country's largest and most powerful Protestant denomination, argued that keeping out the de-

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AMERICAN ANTIWAR ACTIVISTS DISPLAY COPIES OF THEIR NEWSPAPER 'AMEX-CANADA.'

More than fifty thousand young Americans fled to Canada to avoid fighting in the Vietnam War. What became of them?

serting servicemen only perpetuated one of the signal injustices of the war: Those who served in the military before deserting tended to be poorer than draft dodgers, who were usually middle-class. More generally, protesters argued, caving in to American pressure was an affront to Canadian sovereignty.

Emboldened by swelling national confidence in the wake of Canada's 1967 centennial celebrations, liberal supporters of an open-border policy devastated their opponents with passionate appeals to national tradition, pointing out that Canada had harbored a hundred thousand "Empire Loyalists" during the American Revolution, as well as refugees from the 1956 Soviet crackdown in Hungary. (Rock music buffs should note that the opposition included the newspaper columnist Scott Young, rocker Neil's dad, who wrote a piece called "Draft Dodgers: A Passive Breed Doing Nothing and Going Nowhere.") In response to growing liberal pressure, Parliament opened the borders to both dodgers and deserters. After passage of the law, Hagan argues, Canadians felt less bullied by the United States and more secure in their national identity.

Meanwhile, the community of "New Canadians"—as the American war resisters proudly called themselves—faced its own identity crisis. In the 1970s, in a strained atmosphere of militant Quebecois separatism, New Left violence, and economic stagnation, residents of the American Ghetto became convenient scapegoats, and their national status was questioned and challenged. What were they, really? Traitors? Patriots? Canadians? Americans?

Despite these anxieties, the New Canadians worked hard to contribute as citizens. In the 1960s, for instance, they transformed their neighborhood, a gritty district formerly known for its decaying surplus-clothing warehouses, into a thriving commercial zone. (New businesses included The Cosmic Egg and The Yellow Ford Truck, which sold beaded clothing and other handicrafts along with the obligatory hash pipes.) In fact, many observers credit the exiles with helping to establish Toronto's present cosmopolitan reputation. Today, the exiles continue to influence their adopted home. Canada's best-known movie critic, a well-known radio announcer, and a large percentage of Toronto's social workers are New Canadians.

For some exiles, their former identity as Americans was partially restored by the political struggle for a general amnesty. In 1976, the Democratic National Committee invited a "Democrats Abroad" delegation from Canada to its national convention. In one of the antiwar movement's most spectacular, if belated, gambits, exiles nominated one of their own, Fritz Efaw, as a vice-presidential candidate. Efaw's televised nomination was fantastic advocacy for the amnesty issue. (The seconding speech by Ron Kovic was memorably captured in the film *Born on the Fourth of July*.)

On his first full day in office, President Jimmy Carter passed what many Americans recall as a general amnesty, though in fact it was a blanket pardon. As Hagan observes, the pardon was not an exoneration of guilt but a gesture of forgiveness. It was still punitive for deserters, whose less-than-honorable discharges limited their employment opportunities, and humiliating for dodgers, who believed they had no reason to feel guilty for their actions. This outcome, which Hagan deeply regrets, highlights a point that *Northern Passage* implicitly makes all along—and one that Americans observing Bill Clinton's post-presidency understand: You can tell a lot about a country's politics by the pardons it grants.

RICK PERLSTEIN

LOSS OF DIRECTION

IN SEPTEMBER 1997, AT A UNIVERSITY OF Pennsylvania conference called "Specters of Legitimacy," a tanned, gray-haired film director in a light linen suit sauntered to the podium to collect a gold statuette. The director, Allen Smithee, accepted the honor for his "Lifetime Achievement"—a thirty-year career that began with *Death of a Gunfighter* (1969) and led to such fare as *Shock Treatment* (1982) and the recut television version of David Lynch's *Dune* (1988), not to mention *The Birds II: Land's End* (1994) and *Burn Hollywood Burn: An Alan Smithee Film* (1998).

But when Smithee got to the stage, the audience responded less with reverence than with annoyance and bewilderment. Two of the conference's organizers, graduate students Jeremy Braddock and Stephen Hock, were unperturbed. After all, the man receiving the trophy was merely an acquaintance who'd agreed to play the part.

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"Allen Smithee" (sometimes "Alan Smithee") is the sobriquet attached to a film, television movie, or music video when the production's director feels the project has escaped his control. In May, the University of Minnesota Press will publish *Directed by Allen Smithee*, an anthology of critical essays on Smithee co-edited by Braddock and Hock. While some of the essays explore individual Smithee films, the collection emphasizes the broader questions about film authorship and identity that his very existence—or nonexistence—provokes.

"Smithee explodes the notion of authorship itself," avers Braddock, currently a doctoral candidate in English literature at the University of Pennsylvania. "He's also helpful for looking at how market driven auteurism has become." After all, "Allen Smithee" was until recently the only pseudonym for disgruntled directors sanctioned by the Directors Guild of America—which just goes to show how important, and how heavily regulated, proper names have become in the film industry.

The first Smithee film, *Death of a Gunfighter*, was the work of Don Siegel, a director who had been hailed as a genuine auteur by the critic Andrew Sarris in 1968. *Death of a Gunfighter* was a mid-budget Western greenlighted by Universal and initially directed by someone else. Allen Smithee was born when Siegel insisted that the film was more the first director's than his. Since then, roughly fifty films have carried the Smithee name. (Now that Smithee has achieved a certain dubious notoriety, the Director's Guild has opened the name Thomas Lee to similar use.)

By 1997, Smithee was a ripe subject for academic study. That year, Hock convened a small cluster of graduate students who dubbed themselves the Allen Smithee Group. The students met once or twice a week for several months, watching a total of about thirty films helmed by their chosen master. "We were discussing how film's authorship is so strangely prominent in the age of the death of the author," explains Braddock.

The question of authorship has preoccupied cinema scholars for almost forty years. In the 1960s, American film critics and scholars produced studies of directors ranging from Jean Renoir to Alfred Hitchcock. As the discipline of film studies took shape in the 1970s, however, its practitioners cast aside the auteurist approach, which they regarded as a relic of an outmoded, great-man theory of culture. Recently, there's been a small revival of auteurism: Leading film scholars have been writing on such canonical figures as Jean-Luc Godard and Vincente Minnelli. But studying Smithee rather than a more accomplished director offers certain advantages. Because Smithee is not one person, but around fifty, the study of his work occupies something of an intermediary point between anti-auteurist and neo-auteurist methods.

For the most part, *Directed by Allen Smithee* takes its subject surprisingly seriously. One contributor, Craig Saper, compares the Smithee phenomenon with the politics of outing and "the 'fronts' used by blacklisted directors during the McCarthy Red Scare." James F. English compares the auteur with the academic "theory-star"; in this reading, Allen Smithee represents not only Hollywood's "fetish of the name, the economics of the brand, and the logics of celebrity and stardom" but also the academic world's fascination with and dependence on gold-plated proper names. "Allen Smithee stands as a symptom not just of somebody else's desires and dispositions," writes English, "but of the desires and dispositions that form us as academics."

At times, the volume's disquisitions verge on self-parody. Consider the essay on Smithee's *Student Bodies* (1981), a film in which a high school shop teacher evinces an excessive interest in horse-head bookends. The essay interprets the bookends as a premonitory allusion to the film's future director, Allen Smithee. A "smithy" forges horseshoes, after all.

While Braddock and Hock and their contributors may take Smithee studies to heart, it's the subject's implicit levity that's made the graduate students magnets for curious reporters. Allen Smithee's appearance at the Penn conference was written up in the *Los Angeles Times* and *Le Monde*. The group's notoriety has even led to brushes with celebrity, as when Joe Eszterhas, screenwriter of *Basic Instinct* and *Showgirls*, phoned Braddock to discuss the film he wrote about Allen Smithee, *Burn Hollywood Burn*. (Appropriately enough, the film's director, Arthur Hiller, gave his credit to Smithee, supposedly because he was so displeased with the film.) Eszterhas was excited to show the film at the Penn conference. But in order to raise money to rent a movie projector, the graduate students wanted to charge admission, and the film's producer refused.

No screening took place. Even so, Braddock happily recounts this tale—a story rather Smithee-like in its mingling of the commercial interests of Hollywood with the ambitions of the individual auteur. "It was really great to talk to Joe Eszterhas," he admits.

ALISSA QUART

A STILL FROM 'BURN HOLLYWOOD BURN: AN ALAN SMITHEE FILM,' WRITTEN BY JOE ESZTERHAS

Scholars ponder the questions of authorship provoked by film director Allen Smithee's nonexistence.

THE NEAL PETERS COLLECTION

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BORDER PATROL

HYSTERICS, FREUD FAMOUSLY PROCLAIMED, suffer mainly from reminiscences. The same might be said of psychoanalysts. And who can blame them? Pharmacology has trumped psychology in discussions of mental illness. HMOs don't cover five-day-a-week sessions. And hysteria, once the bread-and-butter diagnosis of the profession, has effectively been analyzed out of existence—not by the psychoanalytic cabal itself but by academic feminist theorists.

The symptoms of Dora and Anna O., argue such theorists, were a logical, if extreme, reaction to a society that pathologized women's emotional lives and tamped their sexuality as if it were a nasty forest fire. The criticism has stuck. Or has it? According to Janet Wirth-Cauchon, the disorder of hysteria hasn't so much been erased from history as repressed, only to pop back up, transformed and mutated, with a fancy new name: borderline personality disorder (BPD).

The term "borderline" was first used in 1938, coined by the psychoanalyst Adolph Stern to denote patients who were more than neurotic but less than psychotic, writes Wirth-Cauchon in her new book, *Women and Borderline Personality Disorder: Symptoms and Stories* (Rutgers). In 1980, after nearly half a century of inconsistent usage, it was officially added to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) III*, which defined it as an identity disturbance characterized by "a pervasive pattern of instability of self-image, interpersonal relationships, and mood." It was "manifested by uncertainty about several life issues, such as self-image, sexual orientation, long-term goals or career choice, types of friends or lovers to have, or which values to adopt." BPD patients express "chronic feelings of emptiness or boredom," and, unlike hysterics, their disorder stems from narcissism rather than from Oedipal conflicts. Whereas hysterics classically fainted and froze, borderline patients are prone to violence or sexual aggression.

Still, if BPD patients have one thing in common with hysterics like Dora, it's their effect on

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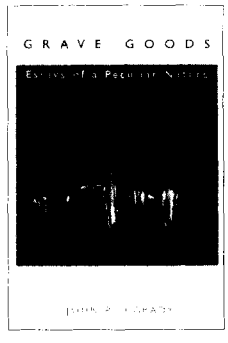
John P. O'Grady



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doctors. In colloquial terminology, "borderline" has come to refer to the patients—as Wirth-Cauchon points out, mostly female patients—that therapists hate. Needy, demanding, "fake," and lousy at telling their stories in a way that's fun for the listener, women with BPD are mavens of countertransference. Maddening as much as they are mad, they're ungrateful to, and ungratifying for, those on the other side of the institution that Wirth-Cauchon calls the "psy complex." Wirth-Cauchon traces this medical hostility toward BPD patients through the official literature on the disorder. She notes that the standard textbook uses Alex, the bunny-boiling villain of the antifeminist fable *Fatal Attraction*, as a model borderline personality.

For all that, "borderline personality disorder" is a wildly popular label. By 1984, only four years after it was voted into the *DSM*, BPD had become the most common personality disorder. Three-quarters of those diagnosed are women. Wirth-Cauchon argues that this stems from several factors. Men with problematic rage and instability tend to be regarded as criminal rather than sick, whereas women with such problems tend to be pathologized. (A mixed blessing for men, certainly.) But most of all, Wirth-Cauchon argues, "borderline" is a sweeping and plastic category. The diagnosis encompasses self-mutilators as well as patients with eating disorders; violent, promiscuous, and "manipulative" women; false-seeming and rage-filled women; women hyperfeminine and hyper-masculine, overly passive and overly active—all manner of female unhappiness, in other words, as long as it is cut with a clinging instability. Borderline personality may be the product of a different set of social conditions, Wirth-Cauchon contends, but, like hysteria, it has its roots in the feminine double bind: Mental health and the traits associated with traditional femininity are regarded by the mental-health establishment as opposites. And in trying to reconcile the conflicting expectations of a sexist society, many women may find themselves classified as borderline.

Relying primarily on a survey of the medical literature (plus a few BPD memoirs like *Girl, Interrupted*), Wirth-Cauchon convincingly documents the muddled history of this catchall diagnosis; in turn, she calls for doctors to recognize the label's basis in gender stereotypes. Unfortunately, her writing is often headachy and circular, with jargon-dense chapters overly enamored with the deconstructionist implications of the word "borderline." In a way, it's hard to blame her for this. She follows in the footsteps of the therapists she studies, who also conflate various notions of the border: between neurosis and psychosis, between sanity and madness, between selves, between patient and doctor. But hers is an "I'm rubber, you're glue" argument. BPD patients are inconsistent—well, so are psychologists! BPD patients are hostile, narcissistic, hopelessly unaware of their own incoherence—so are the people who treat them. These ironies get exhausting after a while, not to mention repetitive.

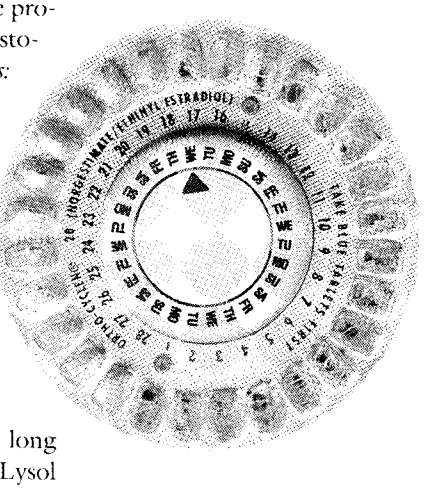
Nonetheless, Wirth-Cauchon's book may have a legitimate gripe. When therapists ignore the way social biases shape the definitions of mental illness, they're more than unhelpful. They may in fact be actively shoring up their patients' unhappiness. A wastebasket diagnosis, in other words, is inevitably going to make patients feel like trash.

EMILY NUSSBAUM

Is borderline personality disorder just a new name for hysteria?

A VIEW TO A PILL

BEFORE *ROE* V. *WADE* LEGALIZED ABORTION in 1973, women found other ways of terminating unwanted pregnancies: They could self-operate with a bent hanger, overmedicate themselves, visit back-alley doctors. And when it came to contraception, women were similarly inventive, claims Andrea Tone, an associate professor of social, industrial, and women's history at Georgia Tech, in *Devices and Desires: A History of Contraceptives in America* (Hill and Wang). Throughout modern history, she writes, sexually active individuals have turned to the marketplace to meet their contraceptive needs, regardless of birth control's legal and medical status. And the marketplace has offered up such unregulated products as Lysol, turpentine, lambskin, and chewing gum—with consequences at times as dire as those of illegal abortions.



Of course, contraceptives have come a long way since the 1940s and 1950s, when the Lysol douche—as ineffective and dangerous as it sounds—was the most popular form of birth control in America. Early ads promoting the antiseptic's safety on "delicate female tissues" also noted its effectiveness as a gargle, nasal spray, and household cleaner. Today, by con-

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Contraceptives have come a long way since the ineffective and dangerous Lysol douche of the 1940s and 1950s.

trast, relatively safe and effective contraceptives are available to both sexes. But with their side effects, aesthetic drawbacks, and (in the case of prescription methods) limited accessibility, condoms, diaphragms, and contraceptive pills, as Tone notes, can't wholly stem the tide of unwanted pregnancies.

It's a problem that initially caught Tone's eye in the early 1990s. While finishing her dissertation and first book, *The Business of Benevolence: Industrial Paternalism in Progressive America* (Cornell, 1997), Tone volunteered at a sliding-scale reproductive-health-care clinic. "I was struck by how socioeconomic variables affected access to and use of safe contraceptives," she recalls. She resolved that her next project would be a social history of the birth control business.

Devices and Desires begins in the late nineteenth century, when birth control was deemed obscene, and therefore illegal, by the U.S. government. The 1873 Comstock Act—named after Anthony Comstock, the principal crusader for the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice—prohibited the transport by mail or across state lines of any "article of an immoral nature, or any drug or medicine, or any article whatever for the prevention of conception."

A black market in prophylactics flourished during the Comstock era, and Tone introduces us to some of its most successful suppliers. Julius Schmidt, who specialized in condoms made from animal intestines, and Joseph Backrack, who produced rubber "womb-veils" in his Brooklyn home, are just two who benefited financially from Comstockery. Subverting the stereotype of a prudish, Victorian postbellum America, Tone describes a world where sexually active people excitedly traded tips on contraceptive methods and where demand for products ran high. Even so, at that time, writes Tone, "no reputable company was reckless enough to make contraceptives its primary articles of commerce."

These days, after decades of expensive experimentation and lawsuits, corporate reluctance to advance contraceptive research has less to do with the threat of prison than with the bottom line. Tone recounts the heartache and great expense—both financial and medical—involved in getting the Pill on the market in 1960. (Lara Marks explores this chapter of contraceptive history in greater detail in *Sexual Chemistry: A History of the Contraceptive Pill*, forthcoming from Yale.) Even more costly was the intrauterine device known as the Dalkon Shield, which came to

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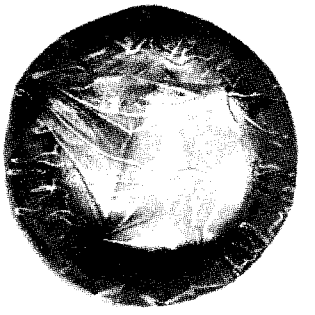
market in 1971. After causing myriad complications in women—including permanent sterilization and death—the shield eventually cost its manufacturer, A.H. Robins, almost $500 million in legal expenses and settlements. (The firm went bankrupt in 1985.) More recently, there have been other debacles. In the 1990s, women scarred by the implantation and removal of Norplant, a subcutaneous contraceptive, sued its manufacturer, Wyeth-Ayerst Laboratories. Another suit represented the interests of women who suffered from headaches, depression, and ovarian cysts in connection with Norplant. Consequently, only two U.S. companies were actively involved in contraceptive research by the 1990s, down from a dozen in the early 1970s.

Still, there are more safe choices available today than ever before. So why are there approximately three million unplanned pregnancies in America each year? For Tone, it's "not the availability of technology that determines patterns of contraceptive use but the specific contexts in which women and men encounter it." Thus, even if modern medicine were to produce the perfect prescription contraceptive—one that prevented the spread of AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases as well as pregnancy, one you can't see or feel, outside or inside—it probably wouldn't make much of a difference, since millions of Americans lack access to proper health care.

The remedy? Tone hopes for the world that Comstock inadvertently created, but with a twist: "Not just cheap contraceptives on every street corner, but cheap contraceptives that *work* on every street corner." Because contraceptive research is still highly politicized, however, it's unclear where these new, reliable choices might come from. The National Institutes of Health is currently barred from funding research into any drug or device that interrupts pregnancy.

The answer to Tone's wish may be the same old Pill we've had for forty years. Just last year, the Food and Drug Administration held its first hearings on whether to make the contraceptive available over the counter—a move that would bring down the Pill's price and make it accessible to many more people. Margaret Sanger, the pioneer of family planning, might roll in her grave at the thought of demedicalizing contraception. But her dream of putting safe, effective methods in the hands of women everywhere could finally come true.

HILLARY FREY



The National Institutes of Health is barred from funding research into anti-pregnancy drugs.

Creative Collaboration

by VERA JOHN-STEINER

This book offers a rare and fascinating glimpse into the dynamic alliances from which some of our most important scholarly ideas, scientific theories and art forms have been born. It allows us to witness the creative process unfolding in the intimate relationships of Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, Henry Miller and Anais Nin, Marie and Pierre Curie, Martha Graham and Erick Hawkins, and Georgia O'Keeffe and Alfred Stieglitz; the productive partnerships of Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque, Albert Einstein and Marcel Grossmann, and Aaron Copland and Leonard Bernstein; the familial collaborations of Thomas and Heinrich Mann, Hubert and Stuart Dreyfus, and Margaret Mead, Gregory Bateson and Mary Catherine Bateson; and the larger ensembles of The Guarneri String Quartet, Lee Strasburg, Harold Clurman and The Group Theater, and such feminist groups as The Stone Center and the authors of *Women's Ways of Knowing*. In this critically acclaimed book, John-Steiner gives us a unique cultural and historical perspective on the creative process. By delving into complex collaborations, she illustrates that the mind—rather than thriving on solitude—is clearly dependent upon the reflection, renewal and trust inherent in sustained human relationships.

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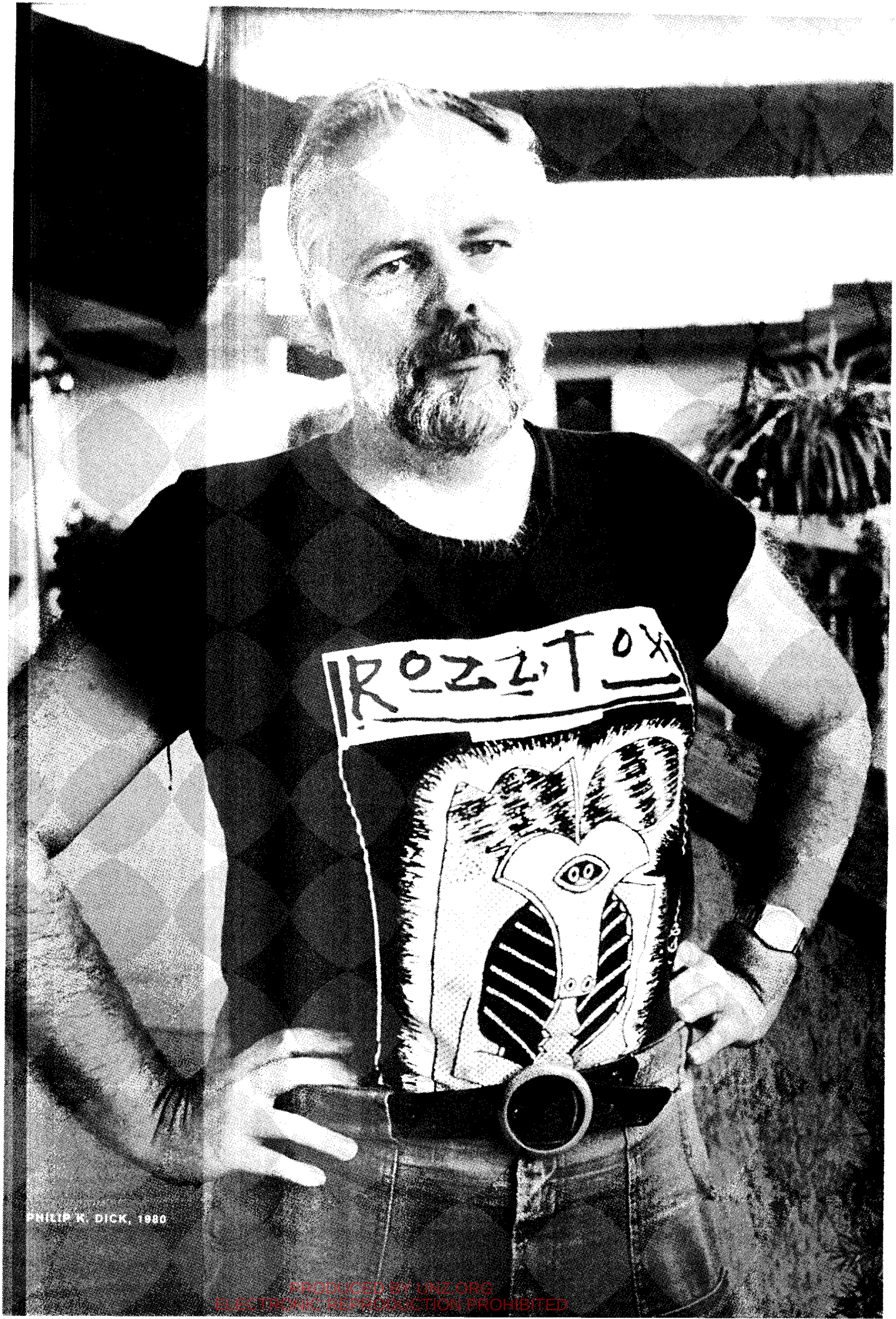

PHILIP K. DICK, 1980

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MARXIST LITERARY CRITICS ARE FOLLOWING ME!

HOW PHILIP K. DICK BETRAYED HIS ACADEMIC ADMIRERS TO THE FBI

BY JEET HEER

WHEN THE NOVELIST PHILIP K. DICK DIED IN 1982, THE INFLUENTIAL literary theorist Fredric Jameson eulogized him as "the Shakespeare of science fiction." At the time of this encomium, Dick was hardly famous. The author of more than fifty books, he had an enthusiastic following among science fiction fans. But he was rarely read by anyone else.

These days, Dick is far better known. Vintage publishes his fiction in a uniform paperback edition. Hollywood filmmakers transform his stories of imaginary worlds and conspiratorial cartels into movies like *Screamers* and *Total Recall*. Meanwhile, academic critics laud him as a postmodernist visionary, a canny prophet of virtual reality, corporate espionage, and the schizoid nature of identity in a digitized world. Indeed, beginning in the last years of his life and continuing to the present, these critics have played a key role in the canonization of Philip K. Dick.

But did Dick return the favor? Not exactly. To their considerable anguish, Dick's academic champions have had to contend with the revelation that their hero wrote letters to the Federal Bureau of Investigation denouncing them. In these letters, Dick claimed that Jameson and other literary theorists were agents of a KGB conspiracy to take over American science fiction. When he sent these messages, Dick was not in the best state of mind: He frequently heard voices and saw visions, often bathed in a mysterious pink light. Even so, the news of his surreptitious campaign against his academic admirers has left some of them deeply disturbed.

In his fiction, Dick had a genius for turning reality upside down and inside out, writing novels in which time runs backward or the Nazis win World War II. Yet the celebrated "reality breakdowns" of Dick's novels seem normality itself compared with the bizarre, unsettling missives he sent to the authorities in Washington, D.C. The laureate of radical postmodernism was, it turns out, a stool pigeon.

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DICK STARTED SELLING SF stories as early as 1951, when he was twenty-two, but he never wanted to be a genre writer. Gifted with a quicksilver imagination and lightning-fast typing fingers, he planned to earn a living churning out pulp stories until he could find a publisher for his realistic "mainstream" novels. To his dismay, Dick discovered that though he could easily sell SF stories and novels, he could not secure a buyer for his earnest and grim tales of working-class life.

Dick received a paltry fifteen hundred dollars a shot for his SF novels, which he produced at a rate of four or five a year; typically they were published as cheap paperbacks, with titles such as *Dr. Bloodmoney* (1965) and *Clans of the Alphane Moon* (1964). Considering the conditions under which the novels were written and published, it is amazing that Dick managed to find any sort of intelligent audience. Yet the best of these books—notably, *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* (1965) and *Ubik* (1969)—presented intellectually ingenious and emotionally lacerating dislocations of reality. In *Ubik*, the hapless protagonist, Joe Chip, travels to Des Moines across a landscape of rapidly decaying objects that are moving backward in time: Coins and elevators, cars and airplanes become old-fashioned versions of themselves. Drawing on SF conventions to dramatize life in the postmodern age, Dick regularly explored the world of mind-altering drugs and shifting realities. Not surprisingly, John Lennon was a fan.

Dick's fiction of the 1960s resonated not only with the counterculture but also with the New Left. Dick, who came of age in Bohemian Berkeley, infused his novels with a satiric radicalism. As he noted in his diary, "I may not have been/am CP [Communist Party], but the basic Marxist sociological view of capitalism—negative—is there. Good." Dick's political imagination is evident in his recurring focus on the world of work. Unlike most science fiction heroes, his protagonists are ordinary working folks who struggle against corporate cartels. (The novelist John Sladek once wrote a parody of Dick's work titled "Solar Shoe Salesman.")

Given Dick's countercultural themes and politics, his work naturally attracted leftists such as Jameson, Peter Fitting of the University of Toronto, and Richard Pinhas, a French critic who went on to form a punk band. Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, Jr., a professor of English at DePauw University, notes that many readers in the late 1960s and 1970s thought Dick was "expressing...sly critiques of capitalism and the American bourgeois world picture." The SF novelist Thomas M. Disch praised Dick for writing "self-consistent social allegories of a more-or-less Marxist bent."

In 1975, the journal *Science Fiction Studies* devoted a special issue to Dick's work. The critics were exceedingly generous in their praise. Polish novelist Stanislaw Lem acclaimed Dick as the only American writer of SF with any merit, "a visionary among charlatans." Fitting lauded *Ubik* as a "deconstruction of bourgeois science fiction."

But could these critics trust Dick? Even before their paeans were published, Dick had begun writing a stream of letters to the FBI. In the earliest of these, written on October 28, 1972, he asserted, "Several months ago I was approached by an individual who I have reason to believe belonged to a covert organization involving politics, illegal weapons, etc., who put great pressure on me to place coded information in future novels 'to be read by the right people here and there,' as he phrased it. I refused to do it."

Dick went on to suggest that this mysterious organization (which he claimed was possibly run by neo-Nazis) had successfully recruited at least one SF writer, Thomas M. Disch. "I stress the urgency of this," he wrote, "because within the last three days I have come across a well-distributed science fiction novel which contains in essence the vital material which this individual confronted me with as the basis of encoding. That novel is CAMP CONCENTRATION by Thomas Disch." (Disch's 1968 novel portrays a totalitarian future America where dissidents are rounded up by the government and subjected to mind-control experiments.)

Around the same time, Dick grew suspicious of Stanislaw Lem, who was starting to gain an English-speaking audience for his satiric science fiction. In November 1972, Lem had secured permission to have *Ubik* translated into Polish. Because of Cold War currency restrictions, Dick was unable to collect royalties from this translation. He blamed Lem for the situation, accusing the Polish novelist of embezzlement.

In February 1974, Dick first experienced his pink-light visions, which continued without interruption until his death.

FEARFUL OF AROUSING SUSPICION AMONG HIS LITERARY-THEORIST FRIENDS, DICK STROVE TO PLEASE THEM EVEN AS HE DENOUNCED THEM TO THE FBI AND DENIGRATED WHAT HE CALLED THEIR "WEIRD MARXIST TALK."

They revealed to him an entire cosmology. Sometimes he experienced the world as a persecuted Christian living in imperial Rome; at other times he felt he was receiving messages from some future superior intelligence, which he named VALIS (Vast Active Living Intelligence System).

Dick was never sure whether the pink light was the voice of God, a message from a space alien, or a drug-induced hallucination (among other possibilities he entertained). Yet despite the pink light's uncertain nature, he often acted under its direction. VALIS issued cryptic theological messages but also offered Dick practical advice on how to deal with his son Christopher's hernia.

The visions also expanded his conspiratorial fantasies, which became global in scope. In March 1974, he claimed to have received two mysterious pieces of mail: a fan letter from Estonia and an anonymous clipping from a communist newspaper. Under the guidance of the pink light, Dick concluded that these letters were part of a

PREVIOUS PAGE: NICOLE PANTER

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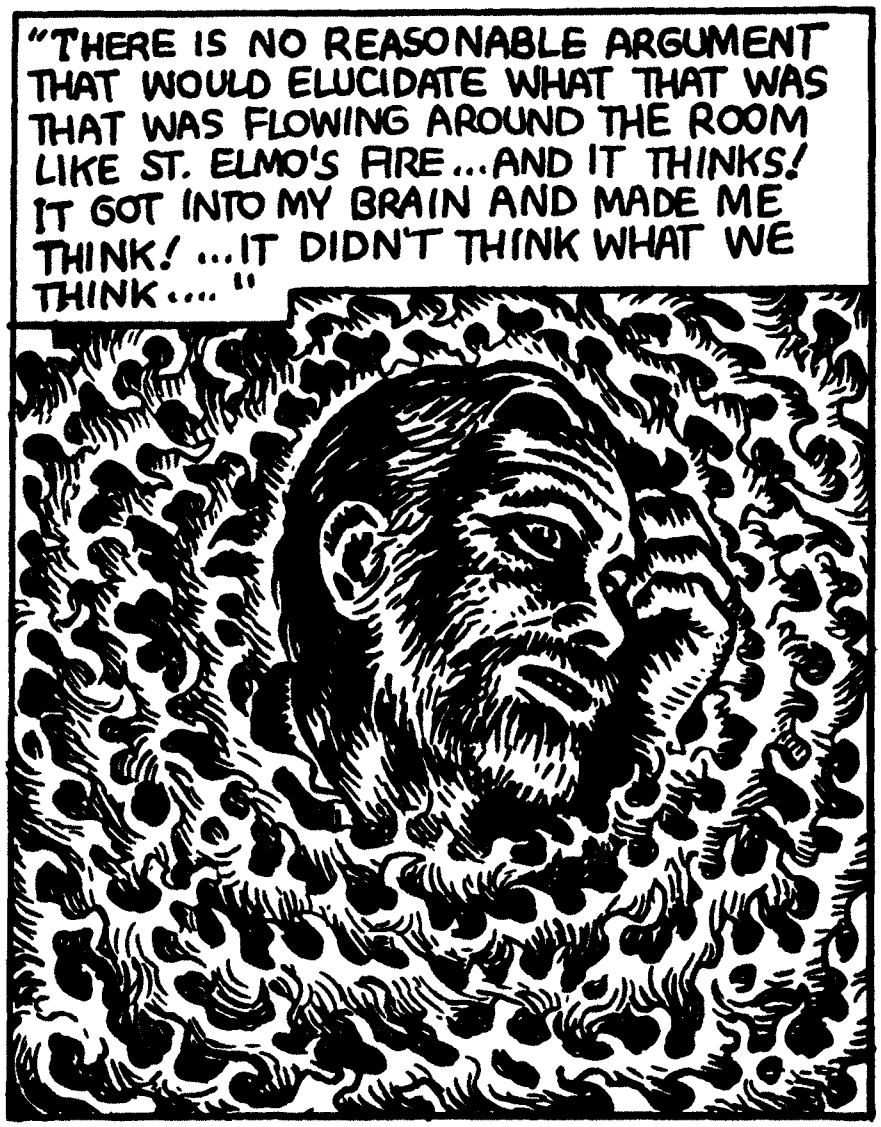
effort to put his loyalty to the test. Connecting the letters to his dispute with Lem, he wrote to the FBI asking for assistance against the communist conspiracy.

On May 1, 1974, Dick got a phone call from Peter Fitting, who had written an article slated to run in the special Philip K. Dick issue of *Science Fiction Studies*. Fitting, who was spending a sabbatical year in San Francisco, wanted to visit Dick and bring along Jameson, Richard Pinhas, and Pinhas's wife, Agneta.

Writing to the FBI after this phone call, Dick connected "the Fitting group" with Lem and "the flurry of weird mail of a Soviet type." He believed that this proposed visit was a prelude to a kidnapping plot: "The Fitting group, including...most especially the foreign national [Pinhas], of whom I am most greatly afraid, in case he is *not* French but from behind the Iron Curtain—in fact maybe a Soviet police agent who wants to talk to me direct, or is from Poland anyhow, representing Lem...."

Despite these fears, Dick received "the Fitting group" on May 15. Again writing to the FBI, he provided a surprisingly genial picture of the visit: "You will be glad to know that in fierce debate we routed the Peter Fitting group, which consisted of four people from four different countries. Their purpose in coming to see me was to get an endorsement from me, recorded on tape, of a Marxist interpretation of my writings. With them, besides a lot of good liquor and a pretty girl, they brought at least three complex Marxist philosophical theses on my novels, one of which they translated from the French aloud, onto tape, for me to agree with. I told them this French doctoral thesis was entirely wrong. We had then a one-hour furious polemical debate in three languages, plus assorted Greek and Latin technical terms, after which they accused my tastes of being 'in favor of God' as well as 'right-wing fascist propaganda' and then departed, leaving their liquor behind (they did take the girl with them, though)."

Fitting himself provides a slightly different account of the visit in a statement prefacing volume 3 of *The Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick*: "It was a very pleasant day. Certainly, there was discussion and even disagreement about the 'meaning' of his work, but I think it fair to say that none of us were concerned about receiving his imprimatur on our readings, or worried that our various interpretations did not


"THERE IS NO REASONABLE ARGUMENT THAT WOULD ELUCIDATE WHAT THAT WAS THAT WAS FLOWING AROUND THE ROOM LIKE ST. ELMO'S FIRE...AND IT THINKS! IT GOT INTO MY BRAIN AND MADE ME THINK! ...IT DIDN'T THINK WHAT WE THINK...."

A PANEL FROM 'THE RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE OF PHILIP K. DICK,' BY THE COMIC-BOOK ARTIST R. CRUMB, 1986 (TOP); SEVERAL OF DICK'S BOOKS HAVE BEEN MADE INTO MOVIES, SUCH AS RIDLEY SCOTT'S SF CLASSIC 'BLADE RUNNER' (LEFT) AND PAUL VERHOEVEN'S 'TOTAL RECALL' (RIGHT).

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agree with the author's conscious intentions. We ate and drank a fair amount; Dick flirted quite a bit with Agneta in a kind of pidgin German.... All in all, a wonderful and amusing day."

Fearful of arousing suspicion among his imagined enemies, Dick strove to please them even as he denounced them to the FBI and denigrated what he called their "weird Marxist talk."

In letters written in late 1974, Dick combined all his various fears into one elaborate scheme. Lem, he imagined, was a KGB agent orchestrating a vast conspiracy that included such pawns as Jameson, Fitting, Darko Suvin (a Canada-based critic who then edited *Science Fiction Studies*), and Franz Rottensteiner (an Austrian who at that time was Lem's Western literary agent). "What is involved here," he wrote, "is not that these persons are Marxists per se or even that Fitting, Rottensteiner and Suvin are foreign-based but that all of them without exception represent dedicated outlets in a chain of command from Stanislaw Lem in Krakow, Poland, himself a total Party functionary.... For an Iron Curtain Party group...to gain monopoly positions of power from which they can control opinion through criticism and pedagogic essays is a threat to our whole field of science fiction and its free exchange of views and ideas." In countering this communist conspiracy, Dick again feared for his life: He believed he was in danger of being kidnapped and brainwashed by Lem and company.

WHILE DICK WAS ALIVE, the targets of his letters to the FBI were not aware of his duplicity. (For its part, the FBI responded with a single noncommittal thank-you note, and does not seem to have acted further on his reports.) But even without the knowledge of Dick's letters to the FBI, his critical supporters became increasingly uncomfortable with the eccentricities of his private life. As Csicsery-Ronay notes, "For the New Left critics, the whole Pink Beam episode was an embarrassment and they never talked about it. It was just another wacky, tawdry Dick thing."

Dick's admirers first confronted the issue of his letters to the FBI in 1991, when the relevant volume of his selected letters was released. The earliest response, by Robert M. Philmus of Concordia University, was also the harshest. Writing in *Science Fiction Studies*, Philmus described Dick's actions against Lem as "slander to an extent that is not only actionable but (legally as well as morally) indefensible."

Today, Philmus explains that he was angry because Dick's letters hit close to home. "This was not something that was remote to me," he says. "These letters involved the denunciation of friends and acquaintances." Yet even Philmus acknowledges that certain mitigating historical and biographical factors relax one's initial outrage. In particular, Philmus believes that Dick's own previous experience with security services sheds light on Dick's actions.

As it turns out, long before Dick approached the FBI, the bureau had approached him. In 1953 or 1954, Dick and his second wife, Kleo, were repeatedly approached by two FBI agents, who hoped (but failed) to recruit the young Bohemian couple to spy on students at the University of Mexico. According to Dick's biographer Lawrence Sutin, these encounters had

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a "lasting" impact and planted the seed for Dick's future anxieties about the national security state. (Not all these anxieties were unjustified, either. In 1958, a letter Dick wrote to a Soviet scientist was intercepted by the Central Intelligence Agency. Ten years later, Dick lent his name to an antiwar ad that ended up in his FBI file.)

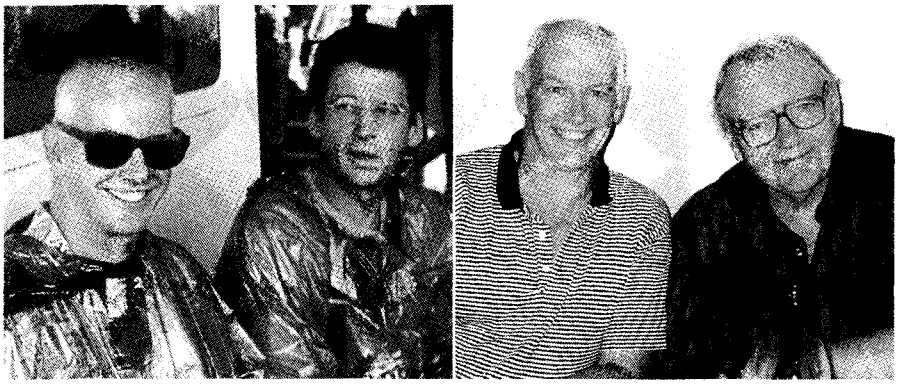
Of all those named in Dick's letters, Disch has perhaps been the most forgiving. In an e-mail interview, he stresses Dick's personal agony. "At this point, early and mid-1970s," Disch notes, Dick "really was freaking out on drugs, almost the whole pharmacopoeia except heroin. The drugs didn't destroy his gift entirely, even at his nadir, but they did make it impossible for him to distinguish between self-interest and Poe's Imp of the Perverse. He loved to make trouble: Witness those letters to the FBI.... He'd follow the moment's inspiration, which would lead sometimes to only momentary mischief (the FBI, after all, didn't take him seriously, so far as I know), sometimes to an okay novel."

Disch also believes that Dick was motivated partially by "pure envy, disguised as paranoid fantasy." In a letter to Disch, written the day after his October 28, 1972, letter to the FBI, Dick extravagantly praised *Camp Concentration* as "not only the finest science fiction novel I've ever read but now that I've realized that, I find myself reflecting that it is the finest novel as such." Disch is "flattered" that Dick felt so threatened by *Camp Concentration* that he had to denounce the novel to the government.

Yet even if Dick's critics forgive his treachery as delusional, can they justifiably canonize him as a great subversive novelist? As Csicsery-Ronay noted in a 1992 survey of the history of Dick's literary reputation, "Dick's paranoid fantasy seems to retroactively undermine the whole point of the effort to apotheosize him as an icon of critical, anti-establishment SF. The historical situation is profoundly, unnervingly Dickian. Even as the earnest critics are trying to establish models of resistance and redemption, their hero is secretly undermining them. The idealism of the beatification essays is now riven with our knowledge that their object was a traitor."

Certainly Peter Fitting's views of Dick's work have changed. In 1975, Fitting had celebrated Dick's fiction for its transgressive power. In his view, most science fiction novels—like most traditional "realist" novels—are ideological constructs that mask the fundamental relations between social classes. They proffer a "conception of reality which mystifies the actual reality of the capitalist mode of production and the resultant repression and alienation." By contrast, he lauded Dick for "carrying subjectivity to an extreme" and thus "reminding us...that 'reality' is a mental construct which may be undermined at any time."

But speaking about Dick now, Fitting says with wary sadness that "there hasn't been anything really interesting written about him in the last decade.... People aren't so interested in him.... It is harder to find a radical vision in his work." Fitting believes that far from intentionally subverting SF, Dick was often "confused," which made his work seem more complicated than it actually was.



PETER FITTING AND RICHARD PINHAS, TARGETS OF DICK'S LETTERS TO THE FBI, SPORT RAIN SLICKERS (LEFT); FITTING AND THE MARXIST LITERARY THEORIST FREDRIC JAMESON SMILE WITH A BOTTLE OF WINE (RIGHT).

COURTESY OF PETER FITTING

DICK WAS AN ERUDITE,

widely read man. But nothing in his career prepared him to appreciate the methods and styles of contemporary literary criticism. In one interview, he complained that he "read a lot of...criticism in which [critics] see a lot of ideas which aren't there at all." Dick may have misread his critics, but in his view, the critics misread him. His story about being asked to plant covert neo-Nazi messages in his books can be read as a paranoid fantasy about literary criticism, which involves not just finding meanings deeply hidden in the text but sometimes also inventing meanings.

Csicsery-Ronay believes that Dick "felt intimidated by and vulnerable to the eggheads," so his letters to the FBI were an attempt "to protect his work from the interference of strange academics." This type of "anti-academic feeling" is "strong in the SF community," claims Csicsery-Ronay, who is the current editor of *Science Fiction Studies*. And indeed, Disch speaks for many authors in the field when he writes that he disdains "SF academics" as "Lukács-style Continental ideologues, who worshipped [Dick]—but in turgid prose and missing half the jokes." In considering Dick's ill-fated relationship with his academic admirers, Disch writes, "I worry more about academe than Dick. The work has stayed in print, it's widely read, and whether it will continue to seem relevant depends more on history than the work itself. That is, he will be worth reading so long as he seems uncannily prescient."

Dick's portrayal of a media-saturated world where reality is lost among simulacra is just as timely as ever, so perhaps we should heed Disch's advice to return to Dick's splendid fiction and leave the sad life behind. Yet separating life and art is difficult with a character like Dick, whose own life and art pushed so hard at the boundaries of the normal. Philmus recently observed that in 1974 Dick "entered the world of his fiction." And as Dick himself wrote to Fitting in that same year, "It seems to me that by subtle but real degrees the world has come to resemble a PKD novel; or, put another way, subjectively I sense *my* actual world as resembling the kind of typical universe which I used to merely create as fiction, and which I left, often happily, when I was done with writing."

Jeet Heer is a graduate student in history at York University in Toronto and a co-editor of *Left History*. His writings have appeared in the *National Post*, *This Magazine*, and the *Literary Review of Canada*.

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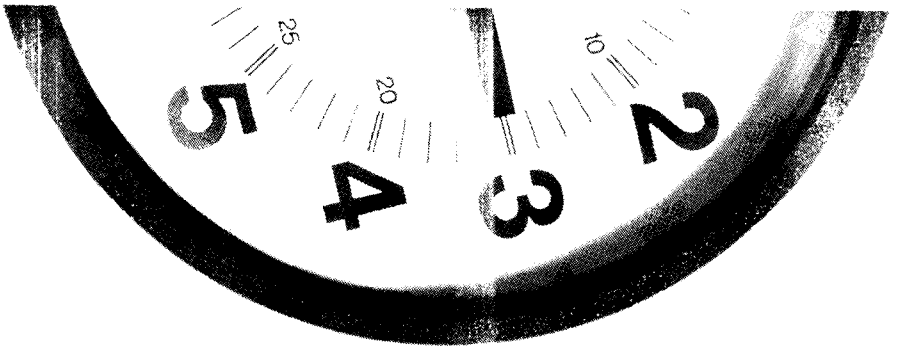
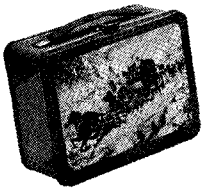
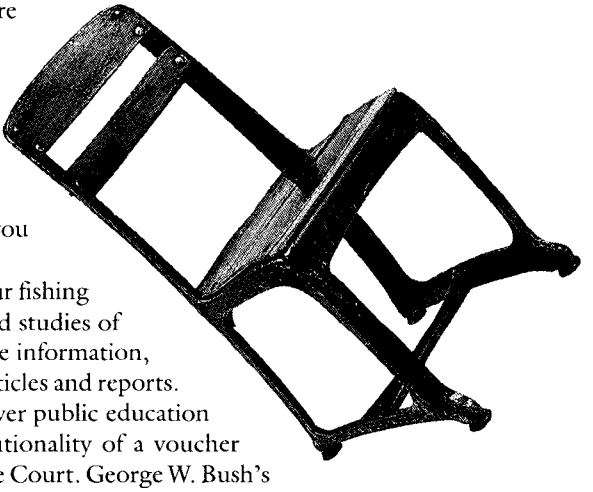


IMAGINE YOU'RE A state legislator who happens, somehow, to be perfectly agnostic on the question of whether public-school students should receive funding to attend private schools. You're unmoved by the free-market-*über-alles* tone sometimes taken by advocates of vouchers, charter schools, and other efforts to inject competition into the education system. You're equally unimpressed by their opponents' claim that our existing public-school arrangements are, or should be, set in stone. You're inclined to support particular choice systems if—and only if—they clearly improve students' achievement without worsening schools' already-grave levels of racial and economic segregation.



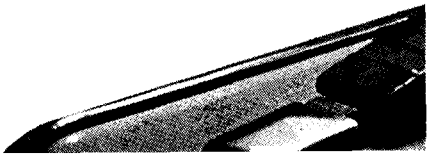
Imagine, further, that you're extravagantly wealthy, so you needn't concern yourself with the prodigious campaign donations offered by interest groups on both sides of the debate. The Center for Responsive Politics estimates that Democrats in the 2000 federal election cycle received close to $5.8 million from teachers unions, which are staunchly opposed to vouchers and broadly skeptical about charter schools. Choice proponents, meanwhile, spent some $45 million on unsuccessful ballot initiatives to establish vouchers in California and Michigan last year. No, you're determined that your judgments about school choice will be simon-pure. Would widespread choice and competition force public schools to improve, as advocates claim? Or—as skeptics worry—would choice simply allow private schools to skim off the brightest, healthiest, and easiest-to-serve students, leaving troubled students in troubled public schools, to the detriment of both? To answer these questions, you swear that you'll look to the evidence alone.



So you dust off your old statistics textbook and head to your fishing cabin, where you'll sequester yourself for the weekend to read studies of the voucher question. It shouldn't be too hard to find reliable information, you think as you settle down with a cup of tea and a stack of articles and reports. After all, vouchers have been near the center of the debate over public education in the United States for more than a decade. The constitutionality of a voucher program in Cleveland may soon come before the U.S. Supreme Court. George W. Bush's administration has signaled that it will promote vouchers and other models of school choice. In Milwaukee, more than nine thousand low-income students currently use vouchers to attend private schools; the city's system has been in place for almost eleven years. There must be some well-established findings by now. Right?

But over the course of the weekend, your fantasies of well-oiled social science and crystal-clear policy judgments are slowly ground into dust. First, you learn that administrative roadblocks have prevented any large-scale study of the Milwaukee voucher system since 1995, during which time it has grown more than tenfold; meanwhile, researchers sharply disagree about what to make of the data gathered between 1990 and 1995. Second, the best-designed voucher study ever conducted has sparked a public quarrel among members of its research team. Third, some of that study's critics have argued not for further, better studies to address its limitations but instead for shutting down vouchers as a subject of inquiry altogether. And fourth, the field has been plagued by ad hominem attacks and accusations of bad faith. Its best-known scholar, Harvard's Paul Peterson, walked away in disgust (or pique, depending on who tells the story) from a 1999 meeting that was partly designed as a peace summit among the researchers.

At the end of the weekend, you emerge from the cabin—ears ringing, eyes glazed over—and lean on your mailbox for a few minutes. This is going to be more difficult than you'd thought.



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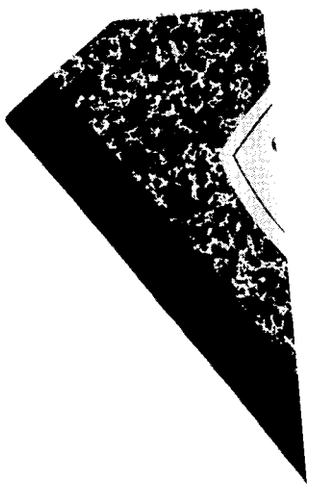
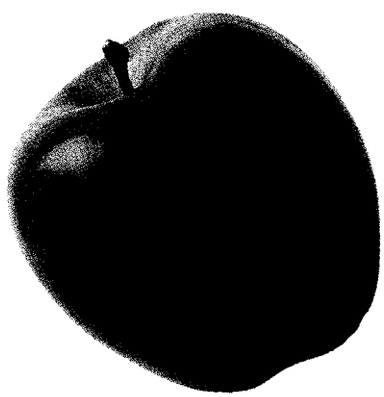
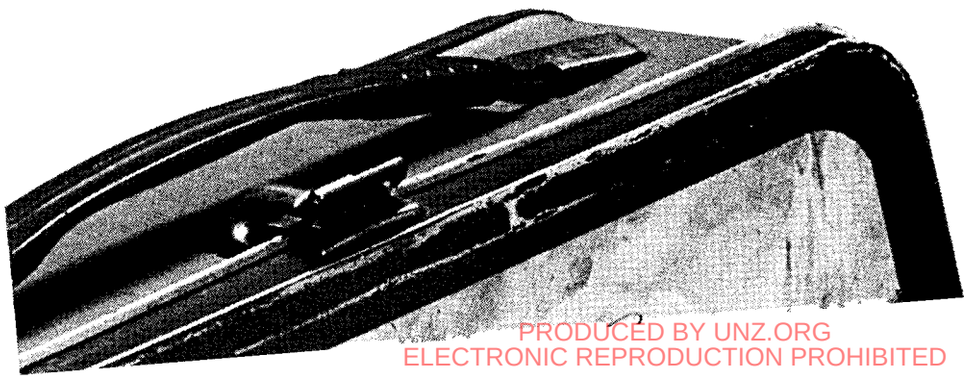


THE VOUCHER VORTEX

IS SCHOOL CHOICE A PANACEA OR A PERIL?



BY **DAVID GLENN**



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RULE 1 *Nothing and no one is immune from criticism.*
—Ten rules for democratic discourse, proposed by Sidney Hook (1954)

William Howell is wiry and boyish—he's just out of Stanford's political science graduate program—and seems to take an almost physical delight in the work of social science. Howell is now in his first year as an assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin, and as we sit in his small, moderately disheveled Madison office, he insists that however high-pitched the political debates surrounding vouchers might become, researchers can always study the issue with care and objectivity. "My approach has been to kind of lower my head and keep working with the data," he says.

The object of Howell's labor was born in early 1997. That spring, Paul Peterson, a professor of government at Harvard, approached the School Choice Scholarships Foundation, which had just announced that it would offer small scholarships to thirteen hundred low-income New York City students. Winners of these scholarships would be able to attend any private school that admitted them, whether secular or religious. Peterson wanted to conduct a definitive study, and he figured that if researchers became involved with this privately funded effort from the beginning, it could serve as a rough proxy for the publicly funded voucher systems in place in Milwaukee and Cleveland and desired by choice advocates elsewhere. In 1998, other privately funded programs in Washington, D.C., and Dayton were added to the project, and Peterson assembled a research team. (In addition to Howell, the group includes two of Peterson's graduate students: Patrick Wolf, now at Georgetown's graduate public policy institute, and David Campbell, who's still completing his Harvard Ph.D.)

Peterson hoped that this project would avoid two of the hazards that had bedeviled analysis of the early-1990s Milwaukee data. First, under time pressure, the Milwaukee researchers had failed to gather a full array of baseline information about the students in the program. Second—and more crucially—the researchers had been unable to agree on what group the Milwaukee voucher students should be compared with: *all* Milwaukee public-school students? Low-income students only? Just the students who'd tried and failed to obtain vouchers?

The Peterson team's attempted solution to these problems was to use a randomized field trial (RFT). This technique, familiar from medical research and increasingly used in the social sciences, allows the researchers to sidestep the quarrels about self-selection and comparison groups that plagued the Milwaukee analysts. "What we did was to hold a lottery," says Howell. More than twenty thousand students applied for the New York City scholarships,

PAUL PETERSON DESIGNED THE MOST AMBITIOUS STUDY OF VOUCHERS.

and thirteen hundred were chosen at random to receive them. The researchers then chose at random roughly a thousand of the lottery's "losers" to serve as their control group. In Milwaukee, scholars had worried that the data could have been skewed by voucher students' unseen characteristics (unusually motivated parents? unusually low rates of learning disability?). But in New York, they could have no such worries, because both groups would be randomly selected. Explains Howell: "Both of these groups are presumptively alike in all respects. This allows you to avoid all of the problems with observational data that require sophisticated statistical techniques to deal with. Here you just compare the groups—where are they going?"

This random-assignment technique is, according to most observers, an important and overdue innovation in school-choice research. The Harvard economist Caroline Hoxby has called RFT "the gold standard" in social science. Cecilia Rouse, an associate professor of economics and public affairs at Princeton, says she's mystified that RFT has been so slow to take hold in this field: "It's one of the tools in the box, but in education it's been almost vilified." (One of the few well-known education studies that *has* used RFT has had far-reaching policy effects. In the so-called STAR study of 1985–1989, researchers used random assignment to explore the effects of class-size reductions in Tennessee. When California launched its $1.5 billion class-size-reduction program in 1996, proponents leaned heavily on the results of the STAR study.)

The Peterson team's experiment is simple. The researchers collected baseline data from all applicants before the lottery was conducted. Students took the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, and researchers asked parents about their income, education, and religious commitments. Once a year, on a Saturday, students in both the control and treatment groups are asked to return for achievement testing (the next grade's Iowa Test) and questionnaires about issues such as class size and school safety.

In the summer of 2000, with two years of data under its belt, Peterson's team prepared an interim report for the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association (APSA). Its major finding: In all three cities, African-American students—but no other ethnic group—made statistically significant achievement gains on the Iowa Test in reading and math when they used vouchers to switch to private schools. This result was quickly trumpeted by voucher advocates.

When I ask Howell what to make of this finding, he replies that it's much too early to say. When I ask him whether he hopes that ten years from now vouchers will be a broadly accepted part of the education landscape, he answers: "No, I don't hope that. I just don't know how to get my head around that. I can say the words for why you should hope for that, and I can say the words for why you should not. But fundamentally, I don't know. That's why I feel most comfortable being buried in the data—just trying to see if there are effects."

But if Howell is undecided about vouchers, Peterson is widely perceived as

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an advocate. In recent years, he has produced hortatory essays for *Commentary* and *The New Republic* ("A Liberal Case for Vouchers"). Partly for this reason, many of his longtime critics were alarmed by the intense media attention that the APSA paper received. In their eyes, this was a tentative, non-peer-reviewed working paper drawn from a study that wasn't even concluded. No big deal, right? And yet here it was, in the thick of an election season, being written up in *The Washington Post* and *USA Today* and celebrated in columns by William Safire and George Will. (The latter, channeling Michael Harrington, declared that one Michigan voucher initiative was "a test of this contented country's capacity to address glaring inequities.")

"On the one hand, Peterson makes these high-toned Olympian statements about the need for randomized studies," says Alex Molnar, a professor of education at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee. "On the other hand, you have these tawdry press releases.... Journalists get these reports on their desks, and they make little effort to make serious evaluations of them. They're not set up to address this."

In mid-September, just two weeks after the APSA meeting, reporters found another press release on their desks. Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., a private firm that collaborates with the Peterson team on the New York City component of the study, was publicly dissenting from the APSA paper's analysis. Not only were the New York achievement gains confined to African-American students, Mathematica said, but they were confined to a single cohort of African Americans: those who were in sixth grade in 1998–1999. Thus began what Howell calls, "from a public relations standpoint, a disaster." He adds: "When researchers on the same team are saying different things, well, red flags are shooting up."

RULE 8 *Do not hesitate to admit lack of knowledge or to suspend judgment if evidence is not decisive either way.*

David Myers, the Mathematica senior fellow who directs the firm's work on the New York City voucher study, is relaxed and easygoing—but slightly wary—when we meet for lunch near his Washington, D.C., office. A few reporters, he says, have grossly distorted the disagreement over the APSA paper. "I haven't recognized my own words," he laments. Myers, who is a decade

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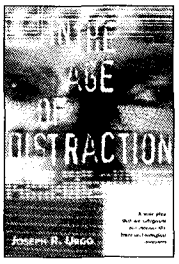
University Press of Mississippi



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By Joseph R. Urgo
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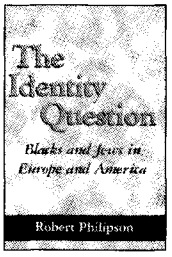

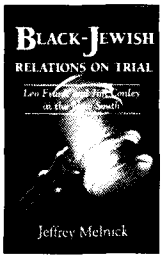

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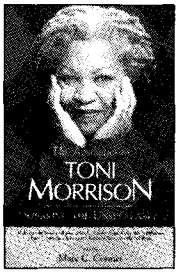

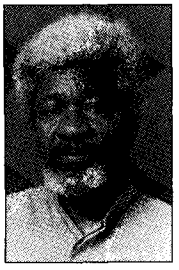

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or so older than Howell, clearly takes his work very seriously but also exudes a certain seen-it-all detachment. Vouchers are only a small part of Myers's bailiwick: He also uses RFT experiments to evaluate Upward Bound and other education programs.

The gist of Mathematica's disagreement is this: In 1998–1999, the second year of the New York City study, the team found substantial achievement gains among sixth-grade African Americans. This cohort performed 7.92 percentile points better than its control-group peers on the Iowa skills test. The third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade African Americans, meanwhile, had small, statistically insignificant test differentials: 1.85, –1.93, and 0.93, respectively. Even though the sixth-graders were just one of the four cohorts, their 7.92-point gain was so strong that it pulled the average for all African Americans in the New York treatment group up to a statistically significant 3.27-point gain.

But was it really correct, Myers wondered, to declare on that basis that African Americans had gained—period—by using vouchers in New York City? "Well, *maybe* there's an effect for African Americans," he says. "But let's wait and see. The effects last year were so concentrated in that one cohort. You have three cohorts with a net result of 1. And then you have this other group with an 8. Well, do you not believe the 1?

"I don't know if it was because of the hype that was put on the APSA paper by the press or not," he says. "But I do know that as I looked again at our data, what it did was to make me more cautious."

For their part, Howell and his colleagues say that for purposes of the APSA paper, which examined all three cities, it was appropriate to aggregate the New York data. "The more data you can draw from," says Howell, "the more stable the findings, and the more confident you can be that they're real." After all, the aggregate gains for African-American students were 6.5 points in Dayton and 9 points in Washington. In Washington, but not in Dayton, the results were more or less consistent across all grade cohorts. If they'd seen patterns like New York's in all three cities, he says, they might have concluded that "there isn't an achievement effect among African Americans generally; there's only an effect among *older* African Americans. And that would be a really interesting story to tell, certainly one that

WILLIAM HOWELL (LEFT) AND PATRICK WOLF HELPED PETERSON CONDUCT HIS RESEARCH.

we *would* tell. But we don't see that finding consistently across the cities—it's only in New York that that holds. We were trying to look across these three cities and look at aggregate trends."

In the months since September, the APSA paper has been criticized on other grounds. In particular, skeptics have questioned the study's high level of "missing values." Despite the researchers' fervent efforts, not all members of the treatment and control groups return for the annual rounds of tests and interviews. In the second year, the testing response rates were disconcertingly low: 66 percent in New York, 50 percent in Washington, and 49 percent in Dayton.

These missing values force the researchers to do some elaborate statistical acrobatics: They compare the people who *do* show up for testing with the original baseline portrait of the entire subject pool. If children of Protestants, say, are underrepresented in the group of testing respondents, those who do show up are assigned weights (they're made to stand for 1.4 Protestants, for example). The Peterson team uses these weights to construct regression equations—a process that involves a serious degree of discretion. How can we be certain that the variables they choose—religion, family composition, baseline achievement results—correctly compensate for the tested subjects' absent peers? And do these techniques adequately offset the possibility that voucher-bearing students with declining test scores are especially likely to drop out of the study?

Howell and his colleagues answer that their technique—using econometric analysis to compensate for missing values—is a common practice in social science. To which the critics reply: Fine; but the missing-value levels here are so high that you should stop claiming that the study

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HOWELL AND WOLF INSIST THAT THEY ARE EAGER TO RELEASE THE FULL DATA SETS—BUT THEY ADD THAT AS JUNIOR FACULTY, IT'S IMPORTANT FOR THEM TO HAVE FIRST CRACK AT THEIR OWN FINDINGS.

meets medical-research standards of experimentation. The sheer number of regression equations, they say, compromises the clarity of the study's results. (One statistician who works on medical RFTs told *Lingua Franca* that "a general rule in medical research is that if you have more than 20 percent missing values, that's a serious problem.")

For his part, Myers isn't terribly concerned about these lines of criticism. "You can always poke holes in randomized trials," he says. But he *is* anxious that the Peterson team's raw data sets be released to the broader community of scholars, so that other researchers can "get under the hood...and do their own reanalysis. Not enough of that goes on in this field." In fact, it's on this point—not the disagreement over aggregating grade-level results in New York—that Myers comes closest to explicitly criticizing his colleagues. Over dessert he looks me squarely in the eye and says, "Mathematica feels very strongly about the importance of releasing the data."

RULE 2 *Everyone involved in a controversy has an intellectual responsibility to inform himself of the available facts.*

Martin Carnoy is a veteran of the New Left—one of his early books, published in 1974, was titled *Education as Cultural Imperialism*—and, like many liberals, he's concerned that voucher systems may exacerbate inequalities rather than remedy them. In his office late one February afternoon, the Stanford education and economics professor expresses gruff bemusement as he reviews the faults he sees in the Peterson team's work. "Frankly, honestly, maybe there *is* such an achievement effect," says Carnoy. "But I can tell you that they haven't done the requisite work to demonstrate it."

In January, Carnoy published an extended critique of the New York/Washington/Dayton research in *The American Prospect*, where he complained, among other things, that it would be impossible to assess the work correctly without seeing the raw data sets. "That's the way things work in academia," he tells me. "You share the data and go back and forth. There are a lot of assumptions built into this kind of work.... In this case, we're *guessing* what they're doing." (Howell has given Carnoy some raw data from Dayton and Washington at his request. More recently, Mathematica has offered to share the New York data with curious researchers.)

Both Howell and Wolf insist that they're eager to release the full data sets but that—as very junior faculty—it's important for them to have first crack at their data, to get something published in a peer-reviewed journal before being scooped. Terry Moe, a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, a professor of political science at Stanford (his office is a few hundred yards from Carnoy's), and the author of the forthcoming *Schools, Vouchers, and the American Public* (Brookings), makes this case more forcefully: "Let's say that you as a scholar have gone to the time and trouble of raising money to carry out your own study—maybe you've spent two years trying to get the money together, collecting the data painstakingly, hiring the staff to do that, and then carrying out your analysis. And then somebody comes along and says, Hey! I'd like your data! What you'd like, I think, is to be assured that you can get a return on your investment. If you think that there are three articles in there, well, you're going to get three articles out of it. *Then* they can have your data."

It's "a plausible concern," Carnoy concedes. But he adds: "I can counterargue and say that in medical research, your findings usually aren't released until they're published in a peer-reviewed journal." Why, then, Carnoy asks, the APSA paper and the press releases? "They know this is controversial, and yet they want to get it out before it's peer reviewed," he says. "They're sort of being peer-reviewed out in the world, but no one has access to their methods."

This question of peer review has confronted Peterson before. In 1999, a researcher with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) named Edward Muir criticized Peterson in an APSA journal for releasing school-choice findings without first going through normal academic channels [See Christopher Shea, "Without Peer," *Lingua Franca*, April 2000]. But perhaps this debate has been oversimplified. Christopher Jencks, a longtime education researcher and colleague of Peterson's at Harvard's Kennedy School, says, "The standard peer-review process is unbelievably slow. I'm quite dubious if you want to say that you have to slow this whole procedure down to the pace of molasses." In the absence of a more responsive system of academic peer review, Jencks proposes an alternative: Funders—like those who have supported the New York/Washington/Dayton research—ought to create a credible review system of their own. Jencks explains, "The funders could say, We're going to arrange for two or three people to take a look at this thing and release their comments along with the original paper."

RULE 9 *Only in pure logic and mathematics, not in human affairs, can one demonstrate that something is strictly impossible.*

Beyond these disputes about statistical method and academic protocol lies the question of the "cash value" of school-choice research: how elected officials will translate it into real-world practice. "Do we really want to live in a technocratic society where these social-science studies are plugged directly into public policy?" asks Bella Rosenberg, an assistant to the president of the AFT. "Albert Shanker [the late president of the AFT] used to say, 'Every education experiment is doomed to be a success.'" In other words, each new cur-

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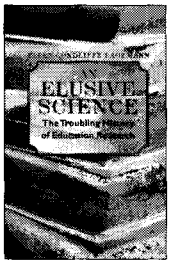

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riculum or pedagogy tends to be studied by its early, zealous creators, who unsurprisingly find that it works—and then the program is foisted on districts far and wide.

Studies that use RFT techniques may be less prone to bias, but they naturally cannot address the long list of contentious issues that school choice raises: segregation, funding equity, school discipline, religious expression. Evaluating voucher programs' "systemic effects" is a thornier business than looking narrowly at their impact on student achievement. School-choice proponents believe that vouchers will force public-school districts to get their acts together in order to compete with the private schools threatening to siphon away their best students. Opponents fear the opposite effect. But how would one test either intuition? Voucher advocates could point to recent changes in the Milwaukee public schools—but how to distinguish which reforms were motivated by voucher competition and which by new statewide high-stakes tests?

Jay Greene, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, released a study in February in which he found that Florida's new voucher system—which gives vouchers only to students in schools deemed "failing" by the state—has indeed motivated schools to improve. Schools graded F by the state and given a year to shape up made sharp gains, whereas schools graded D, and therefore not facing a voucher threat, made far less impressive progress. (Two Rutgers scholars, Gregory Camilli and Katrina Bulkley, have already begun to contest Greene's findings, charging among other things that he improperly aggregated achievement scores across grade levels.) Meanwhile, Princeton's Cecilia Rouse and several colleagues have begun their own six-year study of the systemic effects of Florida's voucher system. They'll consider a range of not easily quantifiable matters: How will public schools change their instructional practices? What types of new private schools will emerge to fill the voucher market? How will the system affect the finances of local school districts?

"Education debates always tap into such dearly held values," says Helen Ladd, a professor of public policy studies and economics at Duke. "When push comes to shove, it's not a matter of whether the coefficient is 0.2 or 0.3." Ladd and her husband, Edward Fiske, who covered education for

CAROLINE HOXBY (LEFT) AND DAVID MYERS

The New York Times for seventeen years, have attempted to address a broader range of issues by conducting a study of New Zealand's decade-old system of school choice. In *When Schools Compete: A Cautionary Tale* (Brookings, 2000), Ladd and Fiske raise a number of questions they believe U.S. voucher proponents should bear in mind: How will governments deal with schools in their death throes—schools that have lost market share, and therefore funding, and don't seem to be making a recovery? Should schools serving students from low-income families or historically oppressed minorities (like New Zealand's Maori) receive extra funding?

Terry Moe is a zealous choice proponent, but he shares one worry with Ladd and Fiske: that U.S. lawmakers will seize upon narrowly defined studies of particular school-voucher programs and neglect a broader range of qualitative evidence. He worries that schools of education have a tight grip on public discourse ("They stay away from certain subjects. Why isn't there a huge scholarly literature on the teachers unions?"). Therefore, he's concerned that the schools will guide elected officials to take a single negative finding (say, that a given voucher program dramatically increased racial segregation) and use that as an excuse to scrap vouchers altogether.

Moe argues that individual bad outcomes should lead us not to abandon school choice but to tinker with the design of the particular program: "If you set up a choice system and see that it's the upper-middle-income, more motivated kids that are taking advantage of it, then you could say, Let's just have a choice system where *only* the low-income kids get to choose. Or you could impose certain rules on the schools that require them to take a certain percentage of low-income kids. These are design issues."

This point is well taken. But will real-world governments be willing to tinker

HARVARD UNIVERSITY; MATHEMATICA POLICY RESEARCH

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JENNINGS HOPED TO START A DIALOGUE AMONG RESEARCHERS—EVEN A JOINT STUDY. BUT THE MEETING ENDED IN STALEMATE.

with choice designs in midstream, as Moe suggests? It's tough to imagine legislators suddenly choosing to take vouchers *away* from upper-middle-income families.

RULE 5 *Before impugning an opponent's motives, even when they legitimately may be impugned, answer his arguments.*

Casually informed citizens may have seen coverage of the Peterson team's findings during the first spate of publicity in late August. Later that fall, they may have read about Mathematica's dissent. "Can't these people get their act together?" they might have thought to themselves over breakfast. "And didn't the RAND Corporation recently come out with two dueling studies about Bush's education policies in Texas? What's social science good for, anyway?"

The AFT's Bella Rosenberg says she fears just this sort of cynicism. The intensity of the school-choice debate, she worries, "promotes an anti-intellectualism." She explains: "The public tends to say, A pox on both your houses—science doesn't matter, facts don't matter, research doesn't matter—because for every study you're going to get another that contradicts it."

It's a natural, lazy impulse: Rather than make the effort to study and unthread these controversies, we simply assume that the controversies' very existence discredits the whole enterprise of social science. And from that lazy impulse, it's a short leap to the next stage of cynicism: assuming that each and every piece of research is corrupt—that it's all ultimately driven by funders' interests and commitments.

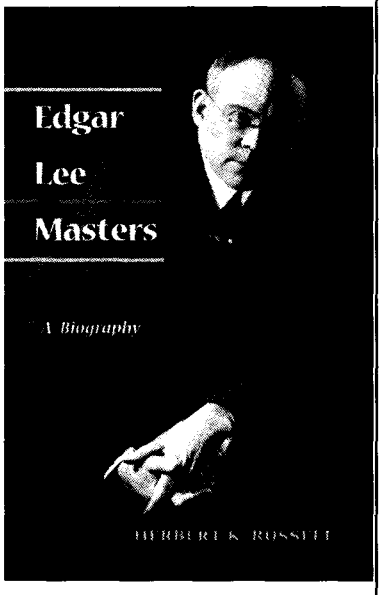
Sometimes this habit can be comic. On February 22, Edison Schools, a for-profit operator of public schools, issued a press release criticizing a new Western Michigan University study that cast doubt on its schools' performance. The Western Michigan study was funded by the National Education Association (NEA), and Edison headlined its press release UNION-SPONSORED STUDY PROVIDES PREDICTABLY BIASED EVALUATION OF EDISON SCHOOLS. The text of the release referred again and again to the NEA's role in funding the study. Just six days later, on February 28, Edison issued a second press release, this time to praise a much more favorable Columbia University study, which happened to have been funded by the same union. The Columbia report's fairness, this release said, reflects "the professional cooperation we have come to expect and value from the NEA."

In the case of Peterson's study, this cynicism takes the form of beginning and ending one's critique by pointing to its funders—which include the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation and the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, both of which passionately support school choice. Myers recalls that when he released a report on the first year of the New York experiment, none of the report's critics called to ask for the data or to look closely at his methods. "They just said, Ah, you're working for that crazy voucher advocate Peterson."

The philanthropists who've funded the scholarships presumably to have an interest—if only not to lose public face—in demonstrating that they work. But Myers, for one, insists that there's been no interference. "I have to give the philanthropists credit," he says. "They've been very responsible with this. They've never tried to influence us, even though they have a vested interest. They're appreciative of research." Howell, meanwhile, says that he's never dealt with the funders at all; that's Peterson's department. "Milton Friedman hasn't been fogging up my glasses," he quips.

This brings us to perhaps the most depressing recent episode in the voucher wars. In 1999, the Center on Education Policy (CEP), a think tank based in Washington, D.C., tried to initiate a discussion among voucher researchers, with an eye toward launching a new round of

A Splendid Failure



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studies that would avoid even the appearance of funding bias. It would be supported equally by liberal and conservative foundations, and it would bring together researchers from all sides of the debates.

RULE 10 *The cardinal sin, when we are looking for truth of fact or wisdom of policy, is refusal to discuss, or action which blocks discussion.*

Jack Jennings, the director of the CEP, has a gentle, weary voice. He served as a staff member for the congressional education and labor committee for nearly three decades, from 1967 until the Republican revolution of 1994. "I was there for the first fight over renewing Title I," he says, "and I was there for the voucher debates of the early 1970s." This largely forgotten episode occurred when school vouchers were briefly promoted by antistatist New Leftists and idiosyncratic liberals like Harvard's Jencks. In 1970, the federal Office of Economic Opportunity offered to fund several field trials of vouchers—but only the small town of Alum Rock, California, took up the offer. Even there, the model was watered down and the results inconclusive.

In 1998, having retreated from Capitol Hill into the think-tank world, Jennings felt sick at heart when he reflected on the continuing bitterness of the country's school-voucher debates. His policy organization, the CEP, had for some time hosted a national forum on public and private education, bringing together leaders from each realm for civil conversations. Perhaps, he thought, the CEP could play the same role for the world of school-voucher research.

In mid-1999, armed with a small grant from the Spencer Foundation, Jennings convened a series of meetings that brought together some forty people: researchers such as Peterson, Myers, Molnar, and Rouse, along with representatives of interest groups (unions, Catholic school federations) and program officers from a diverse array of foundations. This assembly discussed unanswered questions in school-choice research, and the CEP issued a report based on these talks in the summer of 2000. And yet, Jennings recalls with a

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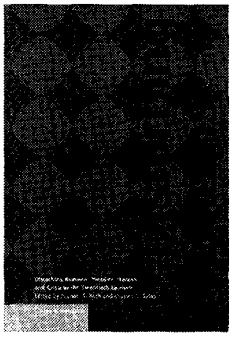

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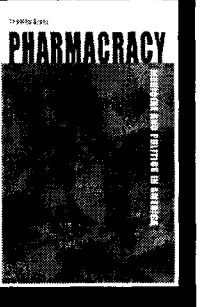

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sigh, all of the group's attempts to endorse a specific plan of research ended in a stalemate. Peterson and Chester Finn Jr., the president of the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, wanted the assembled group to endorse their call for a large-scale, federally funded voucher demonstration program. When they found no takers, Peterson and Finn abruptly (and petulantly, according to some accounts) withdrew from the group. "The limitation of those meetings was that they had a lot of people who were representative of organized interests," Peterson says curtly.

Meanwhile, Jennings had vague hopes of putting together an improved study of privately funded vouchers—with more oversight, more ideologically diverse funders, and perhaps larger scholarships. But the representatives from the AFT, the NEA, and the Parent-Teacher Association refused to support such a proposal, objecting that any further large-scale experiments could damage already-fragile urban school districts. "I was willing to make an effort and let the chips fall where they may," says Jennings. "But only the U.S. Catholic Conference was willing to participate in anything. This was an opportunity to put together research that couldn't be impugned, research with appropriate checks and balances. But it seemed to me that both sides were afraid of the results."

In the absence of additional research, Myers says, the question of vouchers will remain a festering sore. "This will sound kind of crazy," he explains, "but the simplest way to do it is to say we'll randomly pick, I don't know, a hundred school districts where we'll offer vouchers, and we'll randomly place another hundred districts in a control group. And then we're going to watch these places over the next four, five years, and see how they change.... I think that's the simplest thing to do. It's simple to understand, it's rigorous, and I think people would be accepting of the results. It's such a huge issue right now, and we need evidence on it, either to keep vouchers on the table or get them *off* the table. I think we just need to have the backbone to do that."

David Glenn is writing a book on the city of Milwaukee and the future of the social contract. His article about Goddard College, "Speaking Up," appeared in the October 1997 *LF*.

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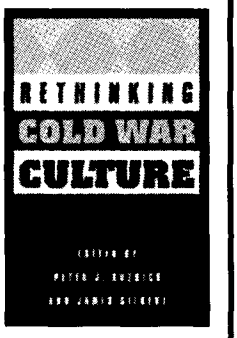

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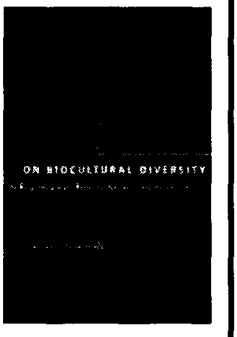

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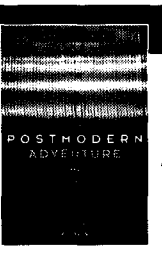

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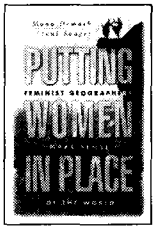

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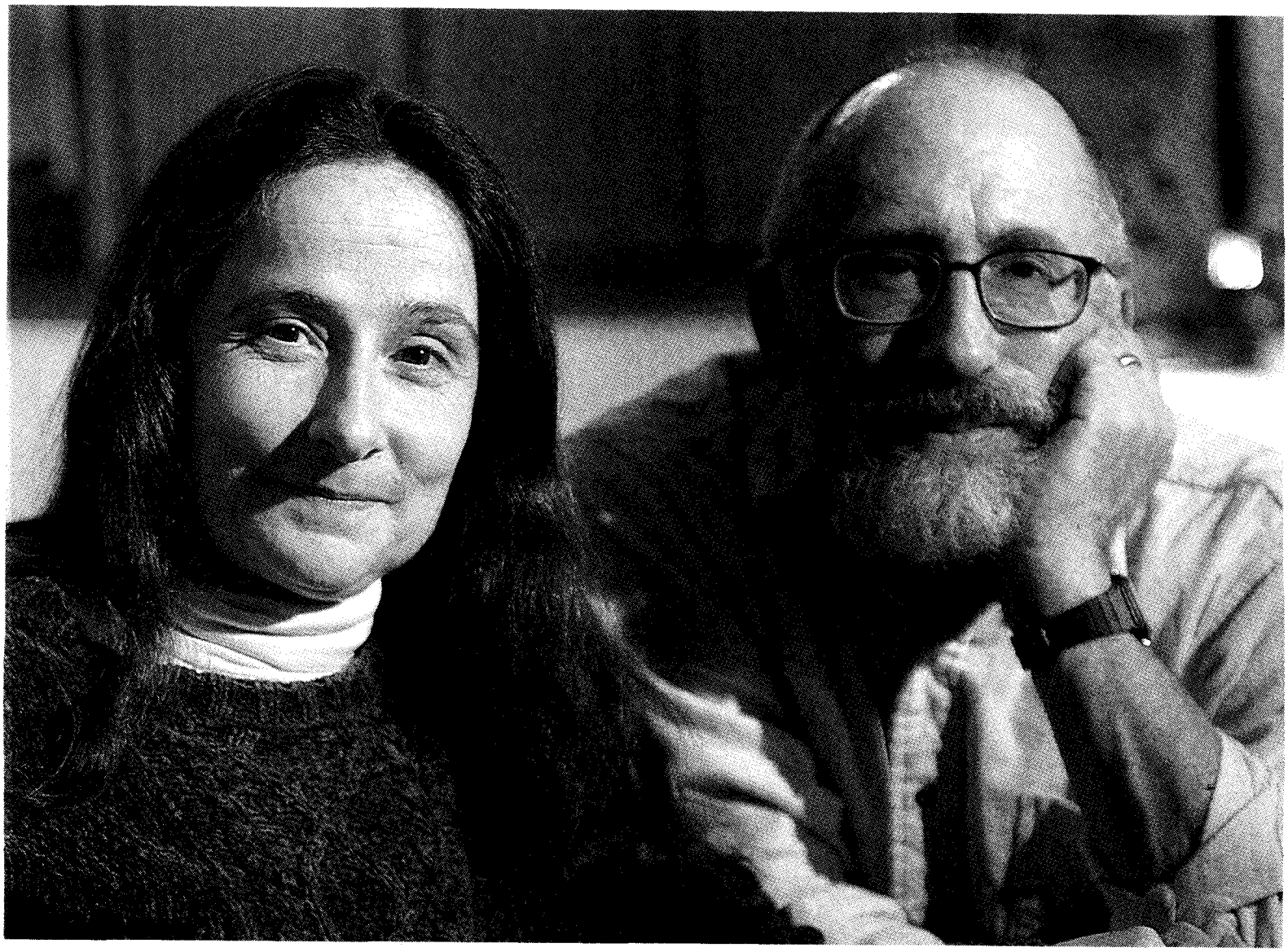

JUDITH LIPTON AND DAVID BARASH FIND THAT MOST MAMMALS AND BIRDS COULD USE SOME COUPLES COUNSELING.

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THE INFIDELITY INSTINCT

A HAPPILY MARRIED COUPLE DEBUNKS THE MYTH OF MONOGAMY

BY **STEPHEN MIHM**

THE SUBURBAN SEATTLE HOME OF David Barash and Judith Eve Lipton radiates domestic bliss. A woodstove glows in one corner of the common area, and hanging along the living-room wall are a dozen-plus photos of their many children. Count the menagerie of pets—four dogs, four cats, four horses, and a turtle—and you've got the makings of a pretty big extended family. And though there are signs that certain human members of this family lean toward the left (a big NO NUKES sticker is plastered on the fridge), all in all it seems pretty conventional. "We're just average people with a happy marriage," says Lipton, setting down a cup of homemade chai in front of me.

Perhaps, but this *is* the couple who just completed a book titled *The Myth of Monogamy* (W.H. Freeman), a playful compendium of the growing scientific evidence that almost all creatures—marmots, bluebirds, even swans—have a penchant for cheating on their mates. And in a sociobiological turn, they argue that this proclivity shapes human behavior as well.

When I ask, in the most diplomatic manner possible, what it's like to collaborate with one's spouse on a book about the seeming inevitability of adultery, they both laugh. Lipton, a psychiatrist, waves her hand dismissively. "The title makes it sound like we've written some kind of 1960s free-love manifesto. Despite all of our research, however, we're not out gallivanting, calculating our EPC opportunities." EPC? Her husband, a professor of psychology at the University of Washington, explains: "Extra-pair copulation."

EPC: It's their shorthand for adultery, one they toss offhand into the most unexpected of contexts—including, say, conversations about *Madame Bovary*. Flaubert's novel is a leitmotif in their discussions, if only because they don't want to recapitulate the age-old wisdom that males are the only ones with wandering eyes: Females cheat, too, they argue, to an unappreciated degree, thanks to the legacy of genetic sifting and striving that underlies the evolution of our species.

The Myth of Monogamy attempts to convey the substance of scientific studies of female infidelity to a general audience. But as Barash explains, it also "puts things together in ways that scientists might not normally do when talking to one another." He pauses. "For better or for worse."

Probably both, if the reception of the couple's past collaborations is any guide. Barash and Lipton are deft popular-science writers, but they're also willing to go far out on a limb when it comes to speculating on the genetic basis of human sexual behavior. Too far, some critics claim.

A TATTERED, overstuffed rocking chair meant for students sits next to David Barash's desk, and notes from several years back are taped haphazardly to his office walls. His decades-long accumulation of books makes an eclectic mix: classic texts

DAVID PERRY

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in sociobiology, the *Tao Te Ching*, Feynman's *Lectures on Physics*, a remarkable number of texts on nuclear-weapons strategy, a lengthy run of *Foreign Affairs* from the 1980s, and countless field guides to mammals, birds, and other creatures.

"I wanted to be a vet when I was seven," he recalls. "I had a love for animals that I never outgrew." Barash majored in biology in college and eventually earned a Ph.D. in zoology at the University of Wisconsin. He wrote his dissertation on the evolution of marmot behavior; countless photos of the plump creatures adorn the walls of his office and living room. He's also written the field's authoritative work, titled (what else?) *Marmots*.

"I'm the marmot man," Barash says to me with a mixture of pride and self-deprecation. "There's another fellow who vied with me for the title, but he's retired now."

Most recently, Barash has studied the habits of male hoary marmots, who employ alternating strategies of mate guarding (keeping other males away from the female) and gallivanting (trying to cuckold their fellow males). Barash wants to apply the insights of game theory to help explain the trade-offs between these behaviors.

Marmots aside, Barash is known for his ardent belief in sociobiology and for his sometimes unorthodox research techniques. In one of his earliest papers, he described an experiment he conducted in the early 1970s. He staked out a nesting female bluebird, waited until the male departed, and then attached a model of a male bluebird near the couple's nest. Settling back into the bushes, Barash watched as the cuckolded male returned, flew into a violent rage, threatened the model and attacked his mate, in one case driving her away and taking up with a new female. When Barash performed the experiment later in the breeding season, after the male's genes had been safely joined with the female's, the male reacted far less aggressively to the incursion. Barash argued that this made good evolutionary sense: Males seeking to ensure that their genes had been passed along could rest easier after the chicks hatched.

But it was Barash's methods, more than his conclusions, that drew fire. As he would later write, "This little study became somewhat controversial, with researchers debating, among other things, the propriety of biologists acting as Iago and inducing violent sexual jealousy on the part of their subjects!" Indeed, one critic penned a response to the study taking Barash to task for his behind-the-scenes manipulations of an otherwise happy bluebird couple.

Less acknowledged at the time, but interesting in retrospect, was the extent to which Barash was already seeking to apply his findings to human beings. In a preemptive defense at the conclusion of the paper, Barash wrote that "the term 'adultery' is unblushingly employed in this letter without quotation marks, as I believe it reflects a true analogy to the human concept." He added: "It may also be prophesied that continued application of a similar evolutionary approach will eventually shed considerable light on various human foibles as well."

Barash made good on that prognostication a few years later, publishing *The Whisperings Within* (Harper & Row, 1979), which used sociobiology to explain human behaviors as diverse as altruism, conflict, and the love of sweets. As he noted in the introduction, he sought to demystify, if not alter, human behavior by placing it in an evolutionary context. "What I hope," he wrote, "is that the animals you'll meet in the following pages will help you know yourself better."

The book was overshadowed by E.O. Wilson's *On Human Nature* (Harvard, 1978) but shared in Wilson's optimism that sociobiology could illuminate the idiosyncrasies of human behavior. Indeed, Barash soon earned a reputation as Wilson's most fervent defender and disciple, with critics calling him "E.O. Wilson's West-coast Huxley," a reference to Thomas Henry Huxley, a.k.a. "Darwin's bulldog."

Like Huxley, Barash has devoted much of his career to spreading the gospel, popularizing its central tenets (he refers to a sociobiology textbook he wrote as "E.O. Wilson for dummies"), and otherwise defending sociobiology at every turn. It's a curious role—half scientist, half agitator. And his detractors are fond of noting that his zeal stands in striking contrast to the critical detachment prized by most scientists. When defending sociobiology (or evolutionary psychology, as the field is now known), Barash's voice rises with the passion of fervent belief.

At the same time, his version of sociobiology is somewhat different from that of his colleagues. Like Peter Singer, the philosopher and author of *A Darwinian Left*, Barash believes that evolutionary approaches to human behavior are compatible with a strongly egalitarian politics. Sociobiology, he believes, does not tell us that selfishness and violence are immutable aspects of human nature. Rather, it illuminates the origins of such human foibles, in the process making them less powerful and more tractable. This sort of utopianism may have something to do with his upbringing. "My parents met through the Young Communist League in Montreal," he tells me over coffee and pastries. "I grew up singing all the appropriate songs." He falls quiet for a moment, clutching his coffee cup. "In a sense, my getting into biology was a reaction against that, although I never disavowed it and still don't, really."

If anything, his parents' intensity has simply been rechanneled into sociobiology. Another of his recent books, aptly titled *Revolutionary Biology: The New, Gene-Centered View of Life* (Transaction, 2001), opens with a cadence and conviction vaguely reminiscent of Marxist polemics. "There is a revolution under way in biology," Barash intones. "It is giving rise to a new vision of life in general, of human beings in par-

"I'M THE MARMOT MAN," BARASH SAYS WITH A MIXTURE OF PRIDE AND SELF-DEPRECATION. "THERE'S ANOTHER FELLOW WHO VIED WITH ME FOR THE TITLE, BUT HE'S RETIRED NOW."

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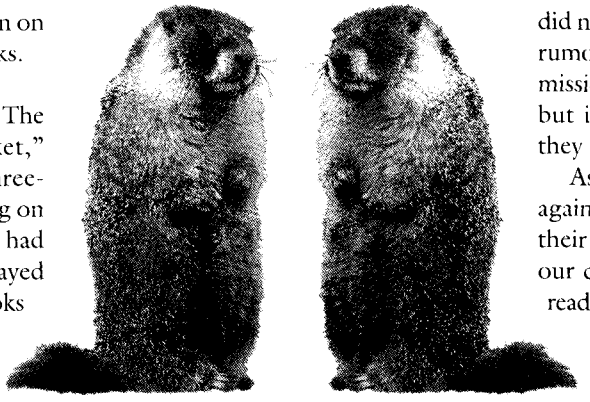
ticular, and a new way of understanding why people behave as they do."

What kind of transforming insights does Barash have in mind? For one thing, we can now recognize that holdovers from our animal past cause us considerable suffering and pain. He explains: "The fundamental human dilemma lies in the disparity between biological and cultural evolution. Many of our problems—war, overpopulation, environmental degradation, sexual conflicts—are outgrowths of that. They're evolutionary hangovers." He stops to watch as I dig into my second helping of pastry. "Take sweets and fat. People living in the Pleistocene savanna got lots of exercise. When they did have the opportunity to eat fat—and they rarely did—it was clearly something to take advantage of." He smiles at me. "Now our culture takes advantage of our evolutionary sweet tooth." I sheepishly put my fork down on the plate. "Want some more?" he asks.

THERE'S NO doubt about it: The cat is in heat. "Her name is Cricket," Lipton tells me, pointing at the three-legged gray tabby howling and rolling on the floor. "We rescued her, but a vet had amputated one of her legs. He also spayed her," she says, frowning. "But it looks like he left some of the ovaries behind." Barash chimes in: "We also have a three-legged turtle named Tryke. Judy got her at a pet store." He points to a cage in the corner before delivering the punch line. "She was able to bargain and get 25 percent off!"

Lipton smiles tolerantly. She's very different from Barash: gentle, soft-spoken, and soothing. As Lipton tells it, she has always been drawn to the study of human sexuality, and she laughingly describes her specialty as "affairs of the heart." Her father, Morris Lipton, was a psychiatric researcher who, among other things, conducted a study to determine what effect the regular viewing of pornography had on the libidos of male undergraduates (the students exhibited increased sexual boredom and reduced interest in sexual intercourse). He also had a knack for biochemistry, as did his daughter, who majored in chemistry at Reed College. In what she now terms a "rebellious act," she married her first husband at eighteen. She had a child a year later. After attending medical school at the University of North Carolina, Lipton eventually divorced and moved to Seattle in 1975, where she completed her residency in psychiatry.

Soon after arriving in the city, Lipton met Barash, who had settled into a tenure-track position at the University of Washington. "We talked about sociobiology and animal theory from the first date," she tells me, smiling. "David did all these studies of gallivanting marmots and cuckolded bluebirds." Barash interjects: "I courted you with those stories." Lipton sighs and assumes a dreamy look. "It's *true*. I was totally enthralled. And then, after we got married"—here her voice becomes more firm—"when the phone would ring at two in the morning, it would generally be [a patient with] an EPC issue. Someone had discovered someone in the wrong bed."



KENNAN WARD, CORBIS

MALE HOARY MARMOTS ALTERNATE BETWEEN GUARDING THEIR MATES AND CHEATING ON THEM.

As Lipton explains, "David has spent much of his professional life studying the private lives of animals. I've spent much of my professional life studying the private lives of people. It's a convergence." That convergence has led them to collaborate on several popular books that combine psychiatry and sociobiology in novel and often controversial ways. After becoming involved in the antinuclear movement and coauthoring an activist handbook, *Stop Nuclear War!* (Grove, 1982), Barash and Lipton wrote *The Caveman and the Bomb: Human Nature, Evolution, and Nuclear War* (McGraw-Hill, 1985), the first of several works that bear the imprint of their disciplinary synthesis.

Their thesis was simple, almost self-evident: Behaviors favored by natural selection in humankind's early evolution were utterly incompatible with the contemporary reality of nuclear weaponry. Natural selection had favored aggressive traits in human beings, encouraging individuals to fight when resolving disputes. Barash and Lipton likened these traits to the urges beloved by Freud: "The subtle inclinations and values of Stone Age thinking typically operate prior to thought or logic and are soon forgotten, just as deep infantile urges may lurk within the most sophisticated modern adults." The solution? "Overcoming the Neanderthal mentality thus becomes an extension of insight-oriented psychotherapy: But instead of seeking merely to resolve childhood experiences and conflicts," they wrote, "we hope to return the reader to experiences and conflicts that occurred within the childhood of our species."

The book's fusion of Freud and Darwin did not yield commercial success (though rumor had it that Mikhail Gorbachev commissioned a translation for his own use), but it did set the couple on the course they pursue today.

As Cricket continues to mew and rub against my leg, I ask them how they think their latest book will be received. "One of our concerns is that some of the people reading this book may come away thinking that human beings are hardwired *not* to be monogamous," Barash tells me. "I would question that notion of wiring." He adds: "At the same time, we are certainly not hardwired *to be* monogamous."

Why write a book that might be open to such misinterpretation? One reason, they explain, was to update some of the arguments in their previous book, *Making Sense of Sex: How Genes and Gender Influence Our Relationships* (Island, 1997). That work, which reads like a scientifically grounded version of *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus,* opted for a familiar Darwinian view of the sexes, propounded by biologists like George C. Williams, who classify men as "aggressive sexual advertisers" and women as "coy, comparison shoppers."

When I ask them what changed their minds, Lipton speaks up: "The DNA fingerprinting data was really the key shift." Using DNA analysis of blood samples, biologists can now pinpoint an animal's parenthood. Many species had long been thought to be sexually monogamous,

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because biologists had watched them live, nest, forage, and copulate with nary a sign of hanky-panky. But beginning in the late 1980s, data began to accumulate that suggested otherwise. The pattern, Barash and Lipton write, is clear: "In the animal world generally, and the avian world in particular, there is a whole lot more screwing around than we had thought."

Take birds. The vast majority—approximately 92 percent of all species—are socially monogamous: They nest in stable pairs. But with more and more evidence, scientists now estimate that between 10 and 40 percent of the offspring of these "monogamous" birds are fathered by an extra-pair male. Even among mammals that are not monogamous, DNA fingerprinting has turned up some surprises. Female chimpanzees in heat, for example, tend to mate with multiple males within their troop. For a long time, this was thought to be the extent of it. But tests of thirteen mother-infant pairs from a troop in West Africa revealed that seven of the newborns had been fathered by males outside the troop—events that had never been witnessed, despite seventeen years of field observation.

That females are so adept at evading detection of their EPCs doesn't stop males of most species from practicing some form of what biologists call mate guarding. Many male birds and mammals shadow their mates in an attempt to prevent EPCs. Male bank swallows, for example, accompany their mates whenever they leave the nest, until the females cease to be fertile, at which point the males become far less attentive and begin chasing other females. Marmots exhibit comparable patterns of behavior, Barash reports.

Neither Barash nor Lipton suggests that there is a direct lesson for human beings in these studies. As they warn expectant readers, "Don't misunderstand: There will be no claim that because hairy-nosed wombats show a particular sexual pattern, people do, too." Still, they do draw parallels, enlisting an eclectic array of biological and anthropological data. On mate guarding, for example, they cite studies revealing that men in 845 of 849 human groups keep close tabs on their mates, sometimes to the point of timing their wives' departures to urinate or defecate.

Not that such tactics necessarily prevent EPCs in humans. One study of inherited blood types published in England in 1957 revealed that within one community, 6 percent of the children assumed to be the offspring of one husband had been fathered by another male. A more recent study conducted in Liverpool and London found that upward of 20 percent of children in otherwise stable families were not the offspring of their ostensible fathers. (Wealthier communities seem to have lower rates of false paternity, which might have something to do with greater access to birth control.) Other studies have documented false paternity rates at 10 percent and higher. And as Barash points out, it is not unheard of for fathers trying to donate kidneys to their children (or vice versa) to find out that they are not related. "You don't want to be the lab technician who has to deliver that news!" he says, shaking his head.

Cuckolded men have long been objects of derision. After all, the conventional wisdom goes, if a woman cheats on her husband, she must have a really good reason (unlike men, who allegedly cheat whenever the opportunity presents itself). These reasons vary, according to Barash and Lipton. Like males, females cheat largely for "fertility insurance": By mating with multiple partners, they can better guarantee that their eggs will be fertilized. Thus female red-winged blackbirds who, in Barash and Lipton's words, "play around" lay more eggs and have a higher number of hatchlings. The same goes for other species.

Of course, there's some evidence that females are looking not only for quantity but also for quality. Whereas males of many species will gladly inseminate almost any available female, females show evidence of "moving up"—mating with males who manifest signs of having better genes.

Take the bluethroat, a bird that lives in Europe and Asia. Males tend to have blue throats; the brighter the throat, the greater the appeal to females. Barash and Lipton report that researchers in Norway selected bluethroat pairs, captured the males, and used a dye to diminish the blueness of their throats. The consequence? Females were more likely to engage in EPCs in an apparent bid to improve their offspring's genetic lot. The dyed males, perhaps recognizing that they were no longer attractive, began to guard their mates more closely.

A similar study altered the tail lengths of male barn swallows (the longer the tail, it was assumed, the sexier the male). Researchers created three groups: one whose tails had been artificially lengthened, one whose tails had been clipped and shortened, and one control group whose tails were clipped and glued back on. DNA fingerprinting revealed that the short tails were frequently cuckolded. In fact, 60 percent of their presumed offspring were the product of extra-pair copulations; by contrast, the figure was 40 percent for the controls, and only 12 percent for the long tails. Females who sensed they could do better sought out EPCs to improve matters for their offspring.

Women, too, may engage in adulterous relationships in order to move up, even if they frustrate that unconscious goal by using birth control. In a rather invasive and controversial study conducted by two British biologists, Robin Baker and Mark Bellis, participating women kept track of both their EPCs and their fertility. It turned out that these women were more likely to engage in sexual activity outside an established relationship at the peak of their fertility cycles—possibly in an attempt to obtain more desirable fathers for their offspring.

Inevitably, I ask Barash and Lipton

"IN THE ANIMAL WORLD GENERALLY, AND IN THE AVIAN WORLD IN PARTICULAR, THERE IS A WHOLE LOT MORE SCREWING AROUND THAN WE HAD THOUGHT," WRITE BARASH AND LIPTON.

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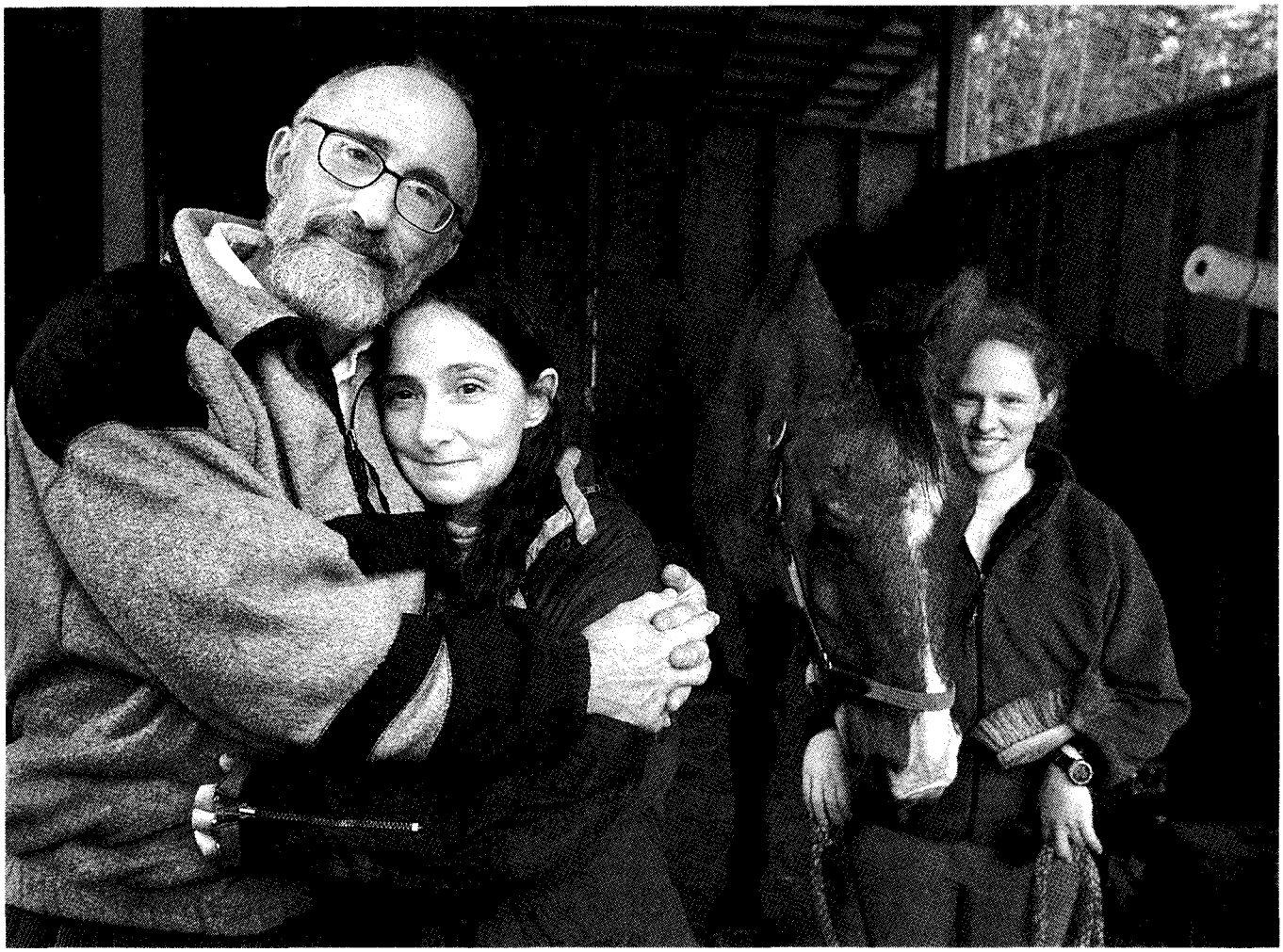

BARASH AND LIPTON'S SUBURBAN SEATTLE HOME RADIATES DOMESTIC BLISS. THE COUPLE HAS FOUR CHILDREN, FOUR DOGS, FOUR CATS, FOUR HORSES, AND A THREE-LEGGED TURTLE.

DAVID PERRY

why human monogamy, even if regularly flouted, occurs at all. Wouldn't human males have an investment in keeping things polygynous, thus ensuring access to multiple mates? Lipton smiles enigmatically. Her husband explains: "We think of polygyny from a male perspective—what a good deal, the male gets all of these females. But if you have one male mated to four females, you have three males left out in the cold. The human transition to monogamy is more of a good deal for the males who would otherwise be excluded."

I must have looked disappointed, because Lipton spoke up: "I think that males tend to assume that *they* would be the sultan and have lots of copulatory opportunities. In male fantasy, having a harem would be great, but if it's a choice of being a bachelor male and watching someone else get all the chicks, you might be willing to settle. Even if you're myopic or aren't six feet tall, the likelihood that you'll get some kind of mate is pretty high."

Barash and I look at each other a bit awkwardly, he adjusting his glasses, I suddenly feeling the limitations of my five-foot-eight-inch physique. "If you're a male, monogamy is a pretty good deal," Lipton says, smiling.

TO WHAT extent can we extrapolate from the behavior of animals to that of humans? It's a giant leap of faith, say critics—one that has defined the field of sociobiology since its inception. Philip Kitcher, a philosophy professor at Columbia, has been skeptical of Barash's work for some time. In his *Vaulting Ambition: Sociobiology and the Quest for Human Nature* (MIT, 1985), Kitcher charges that Barash and his colleagues conduct sloppy science, accumulating a little bit of evidence from another species, identifying a human parallel, positing an adaptive advantage for both behaviors, and concluding that the behaviors arise from the same source. "Once they've got a little bit of knowledge," Kitcher observes, "they claim important things about our own species." But who is to say that the same behavior doesn't arise in different species for unrelated reasons?

Kitcher does not rule out the possibility that evolution has shaped our behavior. "I just reject the idea that we can prove it properly and responsibly given the tools and knowledge that we currently have," he says. "Until we get some serious data to undergird these conclusions, they really shouldn't convince anybody." In the meantime, he counsels evolutionary psychologists to stick to animal studies and "work on less flashy problems where they might actually get somewhere."

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Otherwise, Kitcher notes, one risks substituting subtle rhetorical manipulations for unobtainable data.

Many critics have taken issue with one particular rhetorical move: Barash's use of anthropomorphic language to describe animal behavior. In *Vaulting Ambition,* Kitcher cites Barash's controversial 1977 paper called "Sociobiology of Rape in Mallards," in which Barash argued that male mallards used rape to increase their reproductive chances. Kitcher observed that "The use of [the term] 'rape' in connection with mallards and men is intended to suggest affinities between human and mallard behavior." Barash's word choice, Kitcher argued, "serves not only to conceal logical lacunae. It also does harm by underwriting a pervasive stereotype about rape in humans, the idea that rape is a piece of *sexual* behavior."

Anne Fausto-Sterling, a professor of biology and women's studies at Brown, echoes Kitcher's complaint. In her book *Myths of Gender* (Basic, 1985) she points out that rape is defined in dictionaries as "the crime of having sexual intercourse *with a woman* against her will." She contends that when scientists like Barash use the word to describe animal behavior, they evacuate it of meaning. "The 'instinct' of a female bedbug to avoid forced intercourse certainly holds nothing in common with the set of emotions experienced by a woman who has been raped. Using the word rape," she argues, "robs it of the notion of will, and when the word, so robbed, once again is applied to humans, women find their rights of consent and refusal missing. Rape becomes just one more phenomenon in the natural world, a world in which natural and scientific, rather than human, laws prevail."

For his part, Barash is unrepentant. "You can say 'forced copulation,' but it's euphemistic," he tells me during my visit to Seattle. "There's no question about what was going on: The female was being forced to copulate with the male, despite her strong resistance. If that's not rape, I don't know what is!"

In *The Myth of Monogamy,* Barash and Lipton freely bandy about terms like "adultery," "divorce," and "prostitution" in reference to animal behavior. On the plus side, this sort of wordplay makes the book highly readable and entertaining. But that's not a good reason to indulge it, says Steven Rose, co-editor of *Alas, Poor Darwin: Arguments Against Evolutionary Psychology* (Crown, 2000).

"I'm uneasy about translating terms into the animal world from the human world, just as I am about transposing things the other way around," says Rose. "It's a vulgarization of the words to do that." He pauses. "But what really distresses me," he says, hammering the words for emphasis, "is the sort of *prurient,* almost *pornographic* delight in playing these games, applying the language of human sexual behavior to animals. There's this pleasure in talking dirty, and the media pick it up." Though he hasn't read *The Myth of Monogamy,* Rose is generally skeptical of its line of argument. "Monogamy is a very human concept," he says. "It's utterly ridiculous to apply that to animals."

These are harsh words, but the debates between sociobiologists like Barash and their critics are, well, red in tooth and

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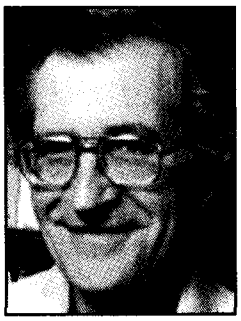

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"MONOGAMY IS A VERY HUMAN CONCEPT," SAYS ROSE. "IT'S UTTERLY RIDICULOUS TO APPLY THAT TO ANIMALS."

claw. Barash doesn't pull his punches, though these days he ignores his critics, directing most of his fire at those scientists he believes undermine evolutionary psychology by applying it to questionable ends. In a review of J. Philippe Rushton's eugenicist tract, *Race, Evolution, and Behavior* (Transaction, 1995), Barash accused the author of "combining numerous little turds of variously tainted data," the outcome being "merely a larger than average pile of shit."

EVOLUTIONARY psychologists are often accused of failing to account for human free will. Barash and Lipton have gone to great lengths to differentiate themselves from the determinists in their field. As Barash tells me at one point, "*The Myth of Monogamy* is not a self-help book, but it may be empowering in that it enables you to see through some of our tendencies and realize that we don't dangle on strings like marionettes, run by our DNA. I know it sounds like a cliché, but the Socratic injunction 'Know thyself' is of value. Something similar may well apply with biology. Knowing what's going on gives us a degree of power and control." Lipton adds: "I have this idea that if people understood their biology better they would be happier."

Barash and Lipton really do believe in the power of self-knowledge to liberate us—not from childhood traumas and neuroses but from the very genetic predispositions they believe govern our lives. "Part of what we have to do as human beings, part of the human project, is the determination to behave against our nature," says Barash. "It's kind of like the Camusian image of pushing the rock up the hill. You know that's your job, and you know that you're going to fail. The human job is to work against our nature."

He tells me he has written an article on the subject, and before I leave Seattle, he puts a copy in my hands. It's from a recent issue of *BioScience*, and the article is a bit of a departure for that otherwise-staid publication. The title, like many Barash sound bites, is simultaneously grand and mocking: "Evolutionary Existentialism, Sociobiology, and the Meaning of Life."

I read it on the flight home. It turns out the reference to Camus wasn't a passing one: Barash worships the existentialists. And rather than see sociobiology as antithetical to existentialism, as any outlook would be that contends our choices are shaped by our genes, Barash sees them as utterly, necessarily compatible. Like the existentialists, he is contemptuous of people (sociobiologists included) who lean on deterministic explanations to excuse their actions. "The human evolutionary bequeathal," he writes, "is almost wildly permissive.... Our genes whisper within us, they do not shout. They make suggestions. They do not issue orders. It is our job, our responsibility, to choose whether to obey. We are terrifyingly free to make these decisions, to keep the ball in the air, so long as our strength and determination last."

Barash's article ends on a hopeful note. If you're looking for evidence that human beings can override their genes, he states, look no further than the bathroom. "Begin with this question," he writes. "Why are human beings so difficult to toilet train, whereas dogs and cats are housebroken so easily?" Dogs and cats, he suggests, "evolved in a world in which it was highly adaptive for them to avoid fouling their dens." Our ancestors, by contrast, evolved as primates in trees; their urine and excrement were more of a problem for the creatures below. And yet, despite our innate disposition to relieve ourselves wherever we can, most human beings *do* learn how to act against nature and thus live better lives. "For all its mammalian, evolutionary underpinnings," Barash concludes with a characteristic flourish, "a primate that can be toilet-trained reveals, ironically, a dramatic capacity for freedom."

Stephen Mihm is a writer who lives in New York. His article "Pet Theory: Do Cats Cause Schizophrenia?" appeared in the December 2000/January 2001 *LF*.

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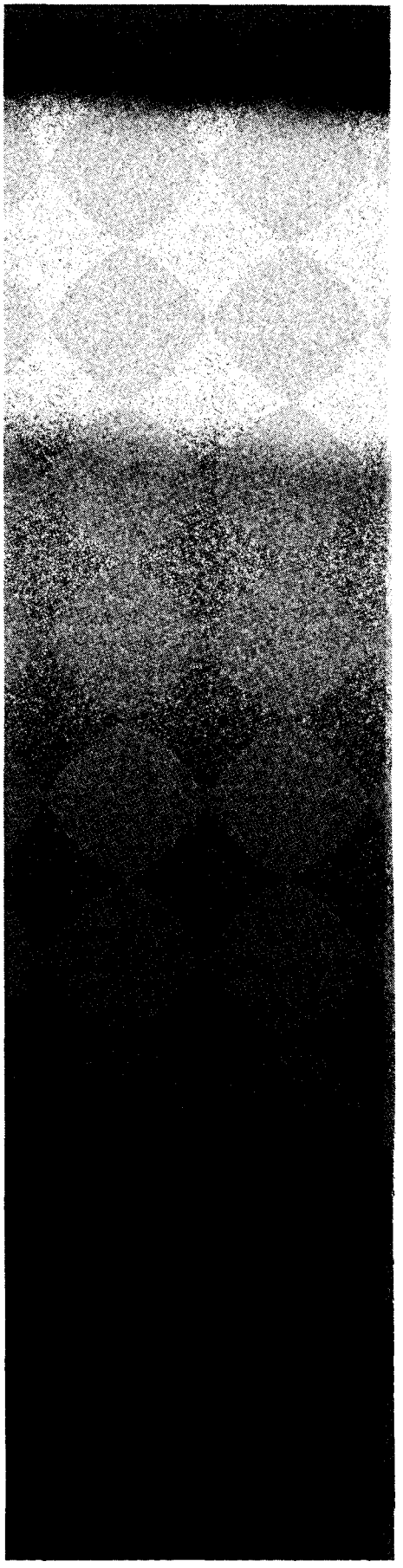
THE CONVICTIONS OF ANTONIO NEGRI

AN IMPRISONED ITALIAN RADICAL ATTEMPTS TO REWRITE 'THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO' AND CLEAR HIS NAME

BY **RACHEL DONADIO**



LAST WINTER, HARVARD UNIVERSITY Press published a book of political theory with promotional blurbs so superlative they would have made Karl Marx blush. *Empire*—a radical treatise on globalization by the Italian political thinker Antonio Negri and the Duke literature professor Michael Hardt—was heralded by the Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Zizek as "nothing less than a rewriting of *The Communist Manifesto* for our time." The Marxist literary critic Fredric Jameson called *Empire* a "great new theoretical synthesis...a prophetic call for energies to come: not a bad way to begin the new century."

The dust jacket for *Empire* includes a further surprise. Negri, the book's principal author, is identified not only as "an independent researcher and writer" but also as "an inmate at Rebibbia Prison, Rome." Indeed, Negri wrote *Empire* while serving a criminal sentence for his participation in an armed political group. His legal saga is complex. After his conviction in 1983, he fled to France; it was only after he decided in 1997 to come back that he began serving the bulk of his sentence. His return has provoked mixed reactions in Italy: The popular press still calls Negri "the bad teacher" and "the professor of terrorism," whereas no less a dignitary than Umberto Eco sent Negri a fax describing his decision to return as "dignified and courageous."

When I visit Negri in his book-filled apartment in Rome's desirable Trastevere neighborhood, where he is now under partial house arrest, the thin, bespectacled sixty-eight-year-old scholar proudly admits his involvement in Autonomia Operaia (Workers' Autonomy), the militant organization he founded in 1973. But he disavows any personal involvement in violent crimes. He explains: "I think I was guilty from this point of view: I tried to organize a movement unlike any other in Europe."

Since 1999, Negri has lived in semi-liberty. He sleeps in jail, arriving at 11:00 P.M. and leaving at 8:30 A.M. for his apartment, which he shares with his companion, the political theorist Judith Revel. At the Rebibbia prison, he has worked regularly with mentally ill inmates, escorting them to medical appointments and organizing painting and drama workshops.

Looking casually professorial in a blue sweater, jeans, and brown wing tips as he sits beside a coffee table piled with books, Negri does not immediately strike one as a surviving hard-liner from a bygone era of radical political agitation. But he most emphatically is. In Italy in the late 1960s and 1970s, thousands of university students, factory workers, idealists, and ideologues joined radical leftist groups. For many of these activists, Negri was an exaggerated Italian version of Herbert Marcuse—a New Left–type guru theorizing the overthrow of capitalism through extreme political action.

But Negri is no longer surrounded by such sympathizers. In the 1980s and 1990s, while he pursued and refined his political ideas as a lecturer-in-exile at the

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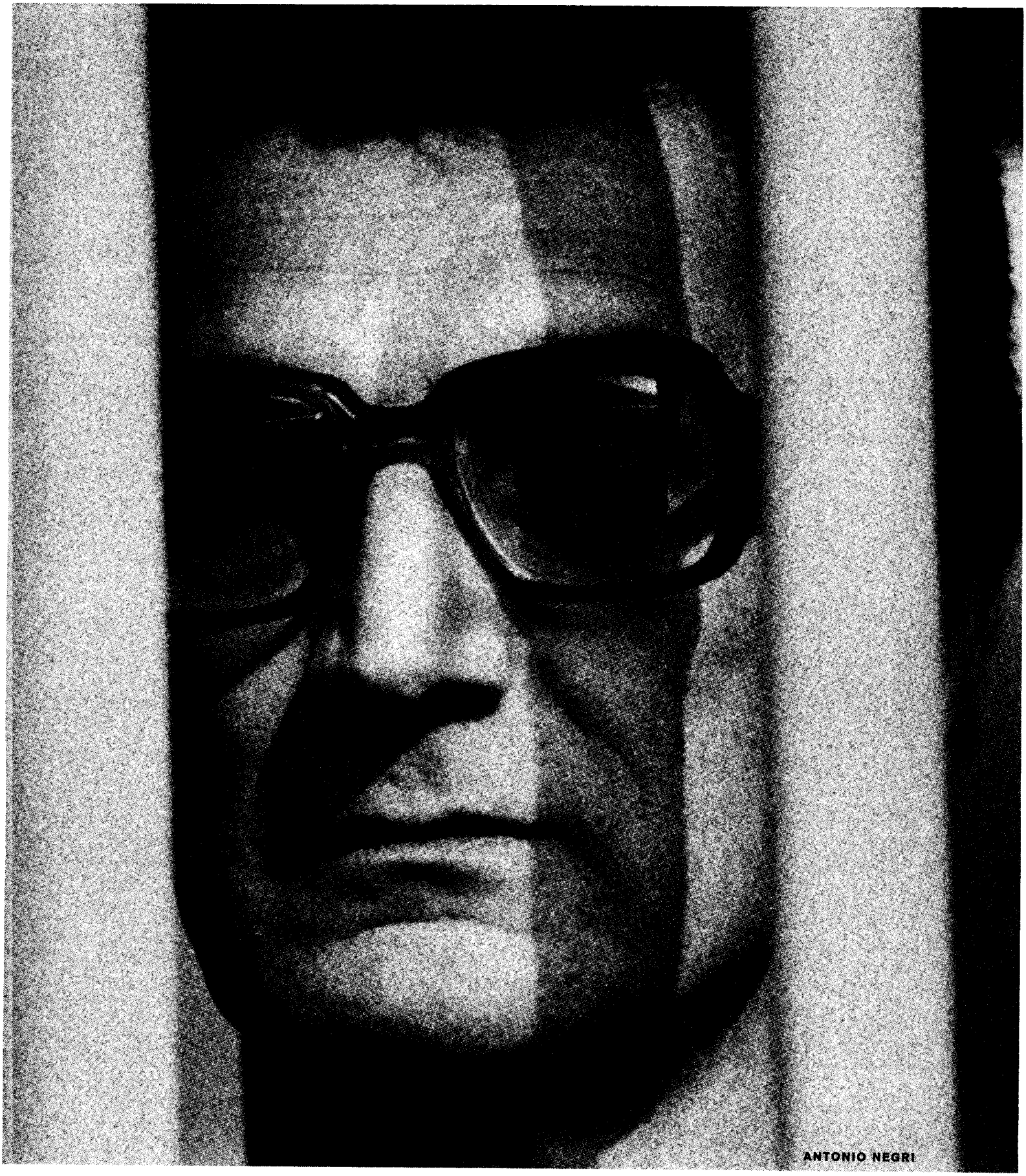

ANTONIO NEGRI

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École Normale Supérieure in Paris, his fellow radicals assimilated into Italian society. Massimo D'Alema, who tossed Molotov cocktails in his youth, is a recent prime minister and current leader of the Democratic Left, the largest political party in Italy's governing coalition. Former militants in the far-left (but primarily nonviolent) movement Lotta Continua (Continuing Struggle) are now editors of mainstream newsmagazines. According to Negri, even his prison cell mate, a convicted murderer and former member of the terrorist Red Brigades, runs an advertising agency.

Today, Negri finds himself a political and social outsider struggling to revive his reputation. And yet to many of his scholarly peers, Negri remains quite relevant, as the reaction to *Empire* demonstrates. Indeed, he wants nothing less than to retool the framework of revolutionary radicalism for the postmodern globalized age. If only the information workers of the world will unite, he believes, the dominance of global capitalism will come to a swift end.

THE ITALIAN POPULAR PRESS CALLS NEGRI "THE BAD TEACHER" AND "THE PROFESSOR OF TERRORISM." BUT UMBERTO ECO HAS DEEMED NEGRI'S RETURN TO ITALY "DIGNIFIED AND COURAGEOUS."

BORN IN PADUA in 1933 into an upper-middle-class family, Negri grew up in a tumultuous environment of fervent Roman Catholicism and political commitment. "I come from a very politicized family," he says. "There was the right and left, but mostly the left." Negri's father, who died when Antonio was two, signed the charter of Italy's nascent Communist Party in 1921. Negri's older brother, by contrast, fought for the Fascists and was killed in 1943 at the age of seventeen by communist partisans. As a teenager in the 1950s, Negri himself was involved in Azione Cattolica, a Catholic activist group. He first became seriously interested in political thought in 1954, when he worked on a kibbutz in Israel during his second year of college. "Then I read Marx," he remembers. "I think I've always been a good Marxist in that I never accepted a single line about the Soviet Union."

A star student at the University of Padua, where he studied under the political scientist and current senator-for-life Norberto Bobbio, Negri graduated with highest honors in his department and in his early thirties secured a teaching post at Padua. As a young professor in the late 1960s, he founded a number of influential Marxist publications, including *Quaderni Rossi,* or *Red Notebooks.* (One of Negri's colleagues on *Quaderni Rossi* was Massimo Cacciari, a philosopher who later became mayor of Venice.)

Like other Italians of the 1968 generation, Negri came of age as Italy's postwar economic boom waned in the late 1960s. The ensuing period was one of considerable labor unrest. Italy was rare among European nations in that its student and worker movements merged, with students leaving universities to picket outside factories. Among the more important fringe groups were Lotta Continua and Potere Operaio (Workers' Power), the latter of which Negri founded at the University of Padua in the late 1960s. These factions of the so-called extraparliamentary left had little faith in conventional political methods and considered the institutions of representative government hopelessly corrupt and unworthy of respect. Lotta Continua and Potere Operaio were especially disenchanted with the official Italian Communist Party (PCI), which they regarded as complicit in the status quo and guilty of dominating trade unions.

In 1968, Negri and a group of fellow Padua radicals held discussion groups in the chemical factories of Porto Marghera, on the outskirts of Venice's industrial fringe, where the academics and students read passages of Marx's *Capital* to the workers. The following year, in a dramatic expression of widespread labor unrest, thousands of students and workers occupied the Fiat auto factory in Turin. Though Negri and his cohort were working outside the established PCI, their tactics at that time were classically Marxist-Leninist: The forces of history were awakening the proletariat to its plight, and the intellectuals' task was to explain to these workers the causes of (and cure for) their disenchantment.

But the political situation in Italy soon escalated beyond peaceful strikes. On December 12, 1969, a bomb exploded at the Banca Nazionale dell' Agricoltura in Milan's central Piazza Fontana. The blast, for which no one claimed responsibility, killed sixteen people and injured more than eighty. Though the bomb was almost certainly planted by right-wing terrorists with the aid of the Italian secret service, the Interior Ministry and police eagerly placed the blame on anarchist groups. Led by Chief Luigi Calabresi, the Milan police arrested and interrogated a Milanese railroad worker and anarchist, Giuseppe "Pino" Pinelli. After his questioning at police headquarters, Pinelli mysteriously fell out a window to his death, which was officially listed as a suicide. (This incident inspired the comic playwright, provocateur, and 1997 Nobel laureate, Dario Fo, to pen his play *The Accidental Death of an Anarchist.*)

Lotta Continua and other radical groups denounced Calabresi as Pinelli's murderer and as the embodiment of a state they considered antagonistic to the needs of the masses. In 1972, Calabresi was shot to death outside his Milan home. (In a case that shares many of the ambiguities and mysteries of Negri's situation, journalist and former Lotta Continua leader Adriano Sofri is currently serving a twenty-two-year sentence on charges that he plotted Calabresi's murder.)

The Piazza Fontana bombing was the first chilling manifestation of what Autonomia and other groups believed to be a *strategia di tensione* (strategy of tension) adopted by right-wing terrorist groups with links to the state and its leading Christian Democratic Party. Many believe that right-wing elements of the state initiated this strategy, and continued it throughout the 1970s, in order to discredit the radical left and increase the appeal of institutions—like the military—that

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seemed to promise stability and security. In any case, for radicals like Negri, the Piazza Fontana bombing marked the beginning of a generation's organized—and sometimes armed—resistance against a state they perceived as repressive. The 1970s and early 1980s in Italy would become known as the Years of Lead, as over 120 people (mostly civil servants) died at the hands of terrorists of various political stripes.

IN RESPONSE to this alarming atmosphere of instability, the Italian state clamped down. In 1973, PCI's leader Enrico Berlinguer agreed to what eventually became known as the Historic Compromise, in which Italy's three leading parties—the Communists, Socialists, and Christian Democrats. The compromise was designed to prevent the government from fracturing along political lines and to forestall the sort of coup attempts plaguing other countries with a strong communist presence, such as Chile. Two years later, the practical consequence of the Historic Compromise was made clear: The Christian Democrats and their sympathizers passed the *Legge Reale*, or Reale Law, a parliamentary act that gave the police the discretion to shoot whenever they felt the public order was threatened. The PCI, which would otherwise have opposed the law, abstained from voting. For many radicals, the little remaining faith they had in the PCI evaporated. In Negri's view, the Historic Compromise was a "perverse conjunction between the Christian Democrats in power and the Communists in the opposition."

After the Historic Compromise, extraparliamentary groups faced a new challenge. The unions—once seen as a basically reliable ally in the revolutionary struggle—now seemed hopelessly acquiescent. The forces of history had not, on their own, shocked most workers into an awareness of their exploitation by the status quo. On the contrary, workers had been pacified and blinded to their plight. Fearing that their revolution would fade into a series of mundane contract negotiations, the extraparliamentary left sought to accelerate history, to cast the state and workers in sharper contrast, to shock workers out of their apathy. Some groups, like the Red Brigades, sought to use violence to provoke a repressive crackdown by the state, which they hoped would lead to civil war.

In 1973, Negri, overhauling Potere Operaio, founded Autonomia Operaia. Autonomia was a decentralized grassroots organization with no single headquarters but many small branches—a rhizome rather than a tree, to borrow the preferred image of Gilles Deleuze, the French theorist whose work heavily influenced Negri. "We had meetings, conferences," Negri recalls. "But transversal things worked best, like free radio." Autonomia was "disconnected, and all the more potent for it." Its goals, Negri argues, were fundamentally linked to its methodology. "It was never really an organization. Its goals were very diffuse." According to Autonomia's Franco Berardi, the group sought to forge a "true mass movement which united young workers, the unemployed, students, and others living on the margins of society."

Autonomia's methods, though avowedly nonviolent, were certainly militant. "Autonomia was never nice, always asserting its muscle," Negri says. One of the group's characteristic tactics was *autoriduzione*, or autonomous price setting. Negri explains: "Say I have to pay 1 million lire in rent, but I decide to pay only 500,000 lire because my salary is low. That's *autoriduzione*." Prompted by Autonomia, whole neighborhoods banded together and "autoreduced" their rents, and workers who had long commutes shortened their workdays to account for the hours they spent in transit. ("This

ROME UNIVERSITY, 1968: LEFT-WING AND RIGHT-WING STUDENTS BATTLE WITH FLAGSTAFFS AFTER NEO-FASCIST STUDENTS OCCUPIED THE LAW SCHOOL (LEFT); HELMETED POLICE STORM THE LAW SCHOOL TO BREAK UP THE BATTLE (RIGHT).

BETTMANN/CORBIS (2)

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ended in the 1980s," Negri recalls, "because people started to get arrested.")

After a few years, Autonomia's methods became more drastic. Sometimes armed, members began "expropriating" goods or looting stores. In the fall of 1976, groups of Autonomia youths flocked to the centers of Milan, Rome, and Bologna and waged an autonomous-price-setting campaign. They took goods from luxury stores and "autonomously reduced" the prices of movie tickets, theater tickets, and restaurant meals "to what their politics required," as Berardi put it. In March 1977, students joined with off-the-books laborers and seasonal workers for a massive demonstration in Bologna in which protesters clashed with police. Around this time, in the incident that ultimately led to Negri's jail sentence, an armed Autonomia cell carried out an "expropriation" of a sugar refinery in Argelato in which a police officer was killed. Negri denies that he was involved in organizing this operation. But he freely admits to assisting its perpetrators' efforts to elude the law. "I simply helped the people who carried out the Argelato heist escape to Switzerland," he says of his abetting role. "I admit it, and I'd do it again."

The precise relationship between Autonomia and the terrorist groups of the time is notoriously hard to pin down. During riots and uprisings, expropriations of goods were often accompanied by kidnappings, beatings, destruction of property, and assassinations. Was Autonomia in any way complicit in the more extreme violence of the Red Brigades, who attacked judges, bureaucrats, and other symbols of faceless repression? Although some Autonomia members seem to have left to join the Red Brigades, Autonomia went to great lengths to articulate its differences from that group. The former Potere Operaio member Franco Piperno referred to the Red Brigades as "lucid 'dispensers of death'" but also as "the receptacle for past errors of the communist movement." Using a sometimes-tortured dialectical logic, Autonomists sought to reject the Red Brigades' methods while embracing its revolutionary goals: "One did not attempt to condemn or exorcise terrorism," Berardi wrote, "nor even to support it in order to gain something from it. Instead, one sought to supersede it." (Disgusted less by terrorism's violence than by its showiness, Berardi claimed that terrorism was too much its own ideology—a "spectacle" that occupied too much room on the "stage-set of class struggle.")

But what was the supersession of terrorism to look like exactly? For Berardi, superseding terrorism involved freeing more than "one thousand political prisoners" and resuming the class struggle outside "the difficult straits of a civil war." The vagueness of this sort of answer explains why many critics saw Autonomia's disavowal of terrorism as a mere smoke screen.

When accused of masterminding the Red Brigades, Negri claimed that "the comrades of Autonomia Operaia are neither the interpreters nor the allies, but rather the sharpest adversaries of the program, the strategy, the tactics and the model of organization of the Red Brigades." Negri still says that, unlike the Red Brigades, Autonomia was not inclined to take up arms against the state: "It was a terrible question, whether or not to kill the adversary. It created a civil war."

Still, others remember Negri as a theorist who declined to dirty his hands with actual heists. "Unlike members of the Red Brigades, he was the sort of person who would say, 'Let us all take up arms, and you go shoot,'" said Frederique Hacourt, a Belgian journalist who met Negri when she was a university student. Today, Negri himself carefully insists on using the term "terrorism" only in reference to acts committed by the state, preferring to call left-wing violence "armed extremism." ("Moro's assassination," he says of the Red Brigades' killing of the former Italian prime minister in 1978, "was part of a long tradition of political assassinations that can't be considered terrorism.")

THE RELATION between the Red Brigades and Autonomia was a key issue at Negri's trial. On April 7, 1979, Negri and a group of other Autonomia radicals at the University of Padua were arrested and investigated by Pietro Calogero, a Padua judge with close ties to the Communist Party. Negri and the other members of the "April 7 gang" were charged with plotting numerous incidents of terrorism, including the assassination of Prime Minister Moro. Under Italy's so-called emergency laws, which were put into effect to combat terrorism, Negri and the others were placed in pretrial detention for more than three years.

In a trial that many have described as a state-organized witch-hunt, 143 people were charged. The judge scrutinized memos and political essays Negri had written, citing them as evidence of—or inspiration for—violent acts. When prosecutors said they had found Red Brigades literature in Negri's Padua office, he countered that he was a political science professor and therefore had various reading materials on hand. When asked, "Who formed the 'little groups' that supported

the 'clandestine' and 'terrorist line'?" Negri responded, "It is difficult, indeed impossible, to answer that question."

As in thousands of Italian trials, many of the charges against Negri stemmed from the testimony of *pentiti,* individuals implicated in crimes but granted reduced sentences in exchange for their testimony. At one point, Carlo Fioroni, a convicted murderer, named Negri as an accomplice to one murder and "morally responsible" for another. In exchange for his testimony, Fioroni was granted immunity, handed a passport, and not required to be questioned by the defense at Negri's trial.

In his closing remarks at the trial, Judge Calogero rejected the claim that Negri was

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merely a political theorist. Instead, he argued that Autonomia, and Potere Operaio before it, were organized armed groups that, with Negri at their helm, received large caches of weapons, some from members of the Red Brigades. He quoted a letter in which Negri had written, "Without weapons, the mass struggle doesn't exist." At last, four years after he was first detained, Negri was convicted on charges of belonging to an armed band and engaging in subversive activity. Other, more substantive charges—including the accusation that he helped plot Moro's death—were dropped. But he was still sentenced to thirteen years in prison.

Negri went to considerable lengths to avoid serving his sentence. Later in 1983, he ran for Parliament as a member of the Radical Party, a small quasi-libertarian political group. He was elected, and under Italian law his victory granted him parliamentary immunity. In the resulting uproar, the Christian Democrats pushed through a parliamentary resolution stripping him of that immunity (the Radical Party abstained). But by that time Negri had already made a dramatic exit, fleeing to France via sailboat.

Over the next decade and a half, Negri lived as a political refugee in France, where the government does not extradite anyone it believes is wanted for crimes of political opinion. (A Web site devoted to Negri is emblazoned with a quotation from Michel Foucault: "But have you heard of a certain Toni Negri? Isn't he in jail simply for being an intellectual?") Still, Negri's status was never quite legitimate: He was never able to get a passport or bank account, he recalls.

While in Paris, Negri's academic reputation grew. He taught seminars in political science at the Collège Internationale de Philosophie, where he developed a devoted following of international academics, including his *Empire* co-author, Michael Hardt. And he published a number of influential books, including *The Politics of Subversion: A Manifesto for the 21st Century* (Polity, 1989); *Communists Like Us* (Semiotext(e), 1990), with the French psychoanalyst Félix Guattari; and *Insurgencies: Constituent Power and the Modern State* (Minnesota, 1999).

In 1997, Negri decided it was time to return to Italy. He believed that the new center-left government, which was run by 1960s-era insurgents, would grant him amnesty. "Fifty percent of why I returned was for personal reasons," he explains, "and 50 percent because of negotiations—not so much with the government or the judiciary but with the political parties." Yet Negri was not granted amnesty; instead, he was sent to jail—an outcome he sees as evidence that his former associates were not actually assimilated into society but rather co-opted and bureaucratized. "With the left in power I thought they'd reopen the debate on an amnesty, but in reality, the left is incapable of opening the debate on justice, and this is one of its main defects," he says. "I kind of feel like they mocked me."

ROME, 1974: STRIKING WORKERS DEMONSTRATE AGAINST INFLATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT (LEFT). TURIN, 1969: METAL AND RUBBER WORKERS GATHER IN THE PIAZZA SAN CARLO TO PROTEST FOR HIGHER WAGES (RIGHT).

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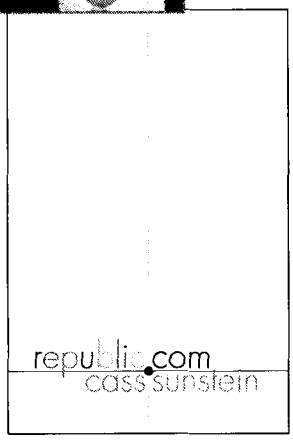

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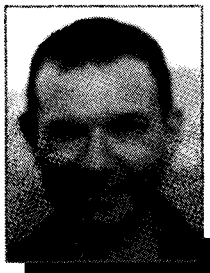

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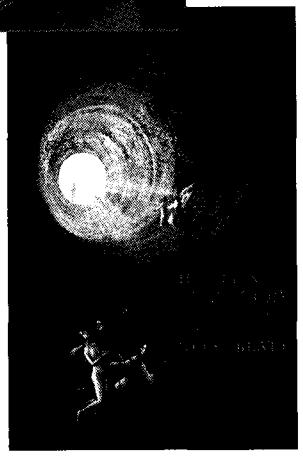

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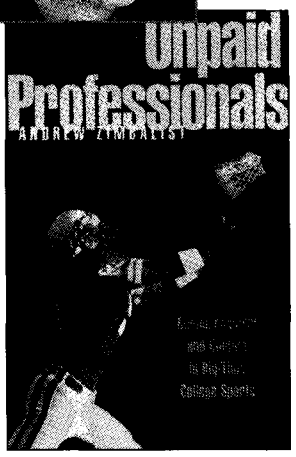

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alive? To judge from *Empire,* Negri begins with the assumption that we now inhabit a fully globalized, informationalized economy with no real power center. Whereas many fellow neo-Marxists stress the persistence of state power and a coherent ruling class, Negri sees a new world at hand. Indeed, his description of the dispersal of centralized power into uncontrolled information networks and capital flows resembles that of cheerleaders for global capitalism like Thomas Friedman, author of *The Lexus and the Olive Tree.* (In a sympathetic review of *Empire* in the *New Left Review,* Gopal Balakrishnan even claimed that the book "can be read as the *Lexus and Olive Tree* of the Far Left.")

"When you talk about sovereignty and the idea of a nation-state in European history, you talk about concepts that don't make sense anymore," Negri says. With the era of state-based imperialism over, according to Negri and Hardt, people inhabit a world of supranational corporations and entities—the "Empire" of the book's title. In this new global order, they argue, the United States is not necessarily functioning as an imperialist power—though most global financial, diplomatic, and military power happens to be held by the United States. (Indeed, Negri and Hardt laud the American constitutional system for permitting sovereignty to remain largely with the people.)

So what distinguishes Negri and Hardt's outlook from Thomas Friedman's? For one thing, they do not believe the globalized economy will empower consumers or bring about higher living standards around the world. Instead, they feel that this new commercial Empire is a far vaster and infinitely more menacing form of domination than anything that has preceded it. ("Empire not only regulates human interactions," they write, "but seeks directly to rule over human nature.") Fortunately, there are grounds for optimism. Just as Empire has replaced the old nation-state, they argue, the international "Multitude" has replaced the nineteenth-century proletariat. As Negri notes, "It is a multitude that can no longer be called a rabble or mob." With labor no longer linked to the factory structure, *Empire* argues, the Multitude are now intellectual workers, "emancipated from factory discipline" and hence not linked to "fixed capital." Sounding something like the ultra-capitalist prophets of the business magazine *Fast Company,* Negri and Hardt cast the Internet as the ultimate rhizome connecting these intellectual workers; it is, they believe, a compelling metaphor for a future of possible "democratic globalization."

Of course, this future has not yet arrived. How will it be brought about? How does a prospective radical in the age of globalization pursue a revolutionary agenda? One way is to globalize the strategies of dispersed, anarchic disruption that Autonomia employed in the 1970s. Negri and Hardt enthusiastically argue that the new capitalist world order, replete with cubicle dwellers with Internet connections, carries even more subversive potential than previous systems and that the time is accordingly ripe for revolution. Local political struggles, they argue, are fundamentally misconceived when they aspire to target local sites of power, for in reality such struggles are mere blips on the radar screen of the vast, decentralized network of Empire. The new model of resistance, Negri and Hardt conclude, should be that of the "nomadic revolutionary"—akin to the eco-protesters who demonstrated against the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle in 1999. Like Autonomia itself, this model also has Catholic overtones. In fact, *Empire* concludes with a paean to Saint Francis, whom Negri and Hardt laud for his denunciation of "the poverty of the multitude" and describe as the epitome of the nomadic warrior.

In the concluding chapter of *Empire,* Negri and Hardt push for three rights that they believe the global multitude should have: the right to global citizenship (a no-borders argument); the right to a social wage (the claim that all citizens should be guaranteed a living income); and—striking a familiar Autonomia theme—the right to reappropriation (that is, to control communication and other means of production). "We argue that they sound unreasonable but that they are reasonable," says Hardt.

Some academic reviewers appreciate *Empire*'s optimism, but criticize the book for failing to explain how theory becomes practice. Just how will the Multitude productively engage in conflict with Empire to bring about revolution? Writing in *The Nation,* the City University of New York sociologist Stanley Aronowitz argues that, having declared labor unions and other traditional avenues of protest obsolete, "Hardt and Negri are unable to anticipate how the movement they would bring into being might actually mount effective resistance." Likewise, the University of Minnesota professor Timothy Brennan applauds *Empire* for "reintroducing the concept of utopia" but contends that in the end *Empire* is "finally conservative," because it refuses to consider using democratic controls to retard the global market: "They float the astounding thesis that the revolution has already taken place—we only need the eyes to see it. We might call this 'the revolution of the already is.'" Other critics simply question the common left-wing assumption that global capitalism is best understood as the latest form of imperial power. In his book *Peoples and Empires,* the historian Anthony Pagden refers to *Empire* as "the most recent, overstated, and hysterical expression of this fear."

ANTONIO NEGRI

MICHAEL HARDT

IN THEIR BOOK 'EMPIRE,' NEGRI AND HARDT LAUD SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI AS THE EPITOME OF THE SUBVERSIVE NOMADIC WARRIOR.

NEGRI'S NEW BOOK may raise his stature as an academic outside

HARDT: ADRIANA GROISMAN

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Itlay; Hardt reports that the translation rights have been sold in eight countries, including Taiwan, Brazil, and Saudi Arabia. But Negri still worries about the challenges he faces in renewing his relevance at home. Though his youthful intransigence has dissipated somewhat, he remains a vocal and unrepentant critic of the Italian state and the role of the intellectual within it. "Italy is a clerical country, and intellectuality is considered dangerous," he claims. "If intellectuality becomes practice—historical materiality—the state feels it has to be eliminated." As an example, he explains that he has a low profile in Italian academic circles because the inventory of his books was destroyed after his trial in the early 1980s. "My works were circulated in Italy before 1979, but then my books were destroyed. [The publisher] Carlo Feltrinelli said, He's in prison and we don't agree with his ideas and they're dangerous."

But perhaps Negri is overstating some of the injustices of his life. Feltrinelli, who heads the left-wing publishing house founded in 1954 by his colorful father, Giangiacomo—a lumber baron, friend of Fidel Castro's, and militant leftist who died attaching a bomb to an electrical pole outside Milan in 1972—contests Negri's claim that his books were destroyed for political reasons. From 1979 to 1981, Feltrinelli explains, his company was on the brink of bankruptcy and was forced to pulp all the overstock in its warehouse. "There was no persecution," he says, exasperated at Negri's claim. "It seems ridiculous that he'd say this, which he's done often. And it's ungenerous toward a publishing house that did a lot for him in those years."

Sitting with Negri back in his apartment, I notice a black-and-white photograph on the living-room wall that shows a group of demonstrators holding a sign that reads, "Let's be unrealistic. Let's demand the possible." Beneath it is a copy of the Veneto region's nineteenth-century charter, onto which Negri has superimposed a photograph of the Italian film icon Totò dressed in an overdone military uniform. Asked to explain why he has fashioned this montage, Negri says, "Because that's the way it is." The repressive Italian state, he feels, is a parody of itself.

But for all his feelings of persecution, Negri refuses to cast himself as a martyr. Looking out the window of his apartment as the sky turns a rich blue, he insists that he doesn't romanticize himself as a scapegoat for his generation. "I don't buy that line," he says.

Before he left Paris to return to Italy, Negri told an interviewer, "Really, there is no substantial difference between prison and the rest of life." What matters, he claimed then, was how you spend your days. Reminded of those comments today, Negri laughs. "These are metaphors and should be understood that way," he says with a chuckle. "Still, I think that so many people don't understand how wonderful liberty is and live as if they were in prison."

Rachel Donadio, a former staff writer for *Italy Daily*, the *International Herald Tribune*'s Italian supplement, covers politics for *The Forward*. Her article "Murder by the Book: Did Two Italian Legal Scholars Commit the Perfect Crime?" appeared in the March 2000 *LF*.

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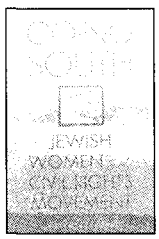

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LIVES WE'VE NEVER LIVED

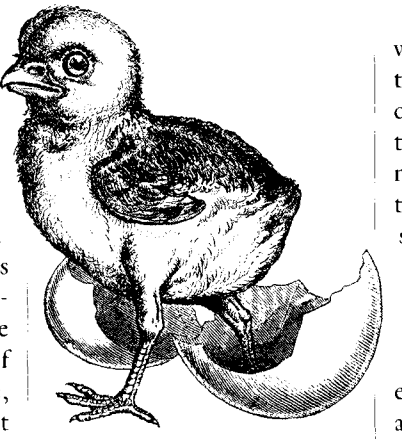
IS NONEXISTENCE WORTH THE TROUBLE?

LATE LAST FALL, FRANCE'S highest court handed down a ruling of great moral and even metaphysical interest. The court declared that a seventeen-year-old boy was entitled to compensation for being born. Because he contracted German measles from his mother while she was pregnant with him—both a doctor and a laboratory failed to diagnose her illness—the boy is deaf, mentally retarded, and nearly blind.

From the parents' point of view, the court's decision makes eminent sense. Had they known about the measles and the associated risks to the fetus, they could have aborted, waited a few months, and then started another pregnancy that would probably have resulted in a healthy baby. From the seventeen-year-old boy's perspective, however, the logic of the decision is a little peculiar. The correct diagnosis, after all, would have led to an outcome in which he did not exist. Would this really have been better for him?

The very idea of judging one's life better or worse than nonexistence strikes some philosophers as absurd. Bernard Williams, for example, has argued that a person simply "cannot think egoistically of what it would be for him never to have existed." Others, like Derek Parfit, contend that it at least makes sense to say of a life that it is worth living or not worth living. If the former, that life is better than nothing; if the latter, it is worse than nothing. Yet even Parfit shrinks from the implication that a person whose life is not worth living would have been better off if he or she had never existed.

Some people feel that any kind of life, no matter how awful, is better than nothing. In his essay "Death," Thomas Nagel characterized this view: "There are elements which, if added to one's experience, make life better; there are other elements which, if added to one's experience, make life worse. But what remains when these are set aside is not merely *neutral*: it is emphatically positive."



If every life is worth living, then it can never be wrong to bring a child into the world, no matter how painful that child's life might be. But most of us feel that it would be wrong knowingly to conceive a truly miserable child. Boys afflicted with Lesch-Nyhan syndrome, for example, not only suffer mental retardation and excruciating physical pain; they also compulsively mutilate themselves. Surely, one has a duty not to bring such children into the world deliberately.

But are we certain we believe in such a duty? Consider a couple who know that if they have a child, he or she will likely have a happy life. Does this couple have a duty to go ahead and conceive a child? Most of us would say no. But why? After all, if the misery of a possible child creates an ethical obligation not to bring it into the world, shouldn't the happiness of a possible child create an ethical obligation to bring it into the world? Why should the well-being of a possible child enter our moral calculus in one case but not the other?

Moral philosophers have yet to come up with a satisfying explanation for this asymmetry. Witness Peter Singer's rather tortuous attempt: "Perhaps the best one can say—and it is not very good—is that there is nothing directly wrong in conceiving a child who will be miserable, but once such a child exists, since its life can contain nothing but misery, we should reduce the amount of pain in the world by an act of euthanasia. But euthanasia is a more harrowing process for the parents and others involved than non-conception. Hence we have an indirect reason for not conceiving a child bound to have a miserable existence." In other words, it is the unhappiness that would be experienced by the actual parents, not by the possible child, that justifies treating the two cases differently.

If the French boy's life is even marginally worth living, then he is fortunate that his mother's case of German measles was not diagnosed. Let's suppose, however, that the boy's life is not worth living. One might say that the doctor who failed to detect the measles infringed on the boy's right not to have a miserable life. Yet this is a right that, in his case, could not possibly have been fulfilled: Owing to contingent features of the human reproductive system, a child conceived a few months later would have had a different genetic makeup, and hence a different identity.

As for the child who might have been conceived by the French couple several months later had the measles been diagnosed, there are two ways of looking at his or her plight. If you believe only in the actual world, then the closest he or she came to reality was as a pair of unconnected (and now-defunct) gametes. Nothing can be fortunate or unfortunate for such an entity. If, on the other hand, you believe in the reality of possible worlds—as, for instance, the Princeton philosopher David Lewis avowedly does—then there are many, many possible worlds that contain versions of this child; and within each of those worlds, the respective child is fortunate to exist.

Whether or not you agree with Nagel's cheerful assertion that "all of us...are fortunate to have been born," he certainly got it right when he added, "It cannot be said that not to be born is a misfortune." And when the chorus in *Oedipus at Colonus* gloomily declares, "Not to be born is best of all," the appropriate riposte is: How many are so lucky?

JIM HOLT

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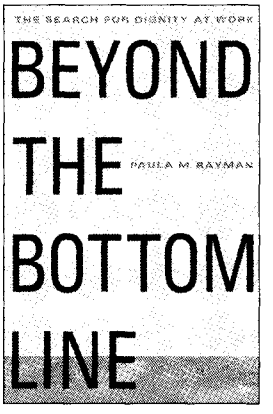

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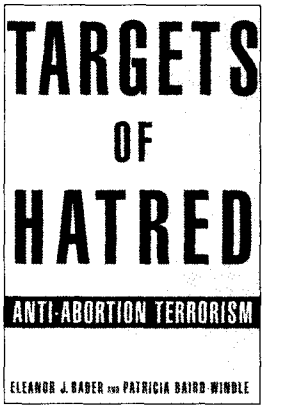

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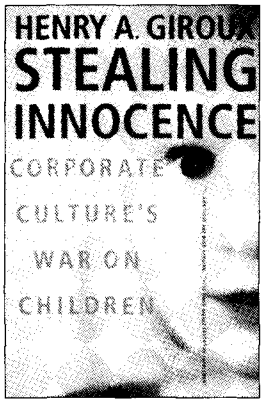

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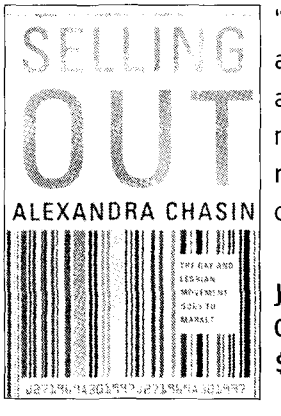

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